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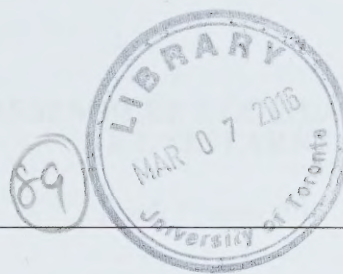








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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 1 March 2016

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2016

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 March 2016

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1<sup>er</sup> mars 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Mr. Gravelle, on behalf of Mr. Murray, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to begin by saying that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Beaches–East York.

Let me just very quickly set the frame for the need for this bill, if I may. Obviously, a new stand-alone bill is required to set a long-term framework for climate action and a stronger foundation for a cap-and-trade program, and to ensure the transparency and accountability of Ontario's path toward a low-carbon economy and the use of proceeds to support greenhouse gas reductions.

This new bill will replace and expand the existing legal framework to clearly outline the purpose and elements of the proposed cap-and-trade program, setting a much stronger framework. May I also say that, in addition, the proposed bill enshrines the government's commitment to fight climate change by reaffirming emission reduction targets and the need to publish action plans and progress reports, providing the certainty, transparency and accountability necessary for continued progress toward a prosperous, low-carbon economy.

If I may, I will pass on to the member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thanks to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for moving second reading of this very important bill. It gives me great pleasure to provide the government's leadoff debate, or maybe second position debate, having had the minister start with a very short lead.

I think this is the first time I have had an opportunity to stand in this House and present a bill for an extended

period of speaking time, and I hope to be able to educate the House, to enlighten them on the contents of this bill over pretty much the next hour and get us all thinking in a very positive way about why this bill is so important.

If passed, of course, this legislation will establish a strong legal foundation for Ontario's cap-and-trade program, and will ensure transparency and accountability by committing to reinvest proceeds from cap-and-trade into projects that reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

I'm absolutely honoured to have this opportunity to speak to this bill today. I'm honoured primarily because I think the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change have shown trust in me that I can present to the House the rationale for why this bill is so important. I'm honoured because, in my view, this bill is absolutely transformational to the province of Ontario and, indeed, to the work that other cities, provinces and countries around the world are doing.

I believe that this bill is probably the most important thing we will do, certainly, in this session and, indeed, in this Parliament because, as Leonardo DiCaprio said the other day at the Oscars—I heard the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change mention this in his remarks on a question yesterday—this is so critical; if we don't get this piece right, in 30 years, we won't be around, effectively, to get anything else right. So it's absolutely critical that we put in place the kinds of mitigation measures now, reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere, so that we can reverse a trend that will take place in greenhouse gas and the heating of the planet.

We should understand that we are experiencing today the climate change impacts of emissions that happened a generation ago—20-some years ago—and the efforts and actions we take now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions aren't going to show up until 10, 15 or 20 years down the pike. One of the reasons that it's so hard to get our minds around the necessity of acting now is that it's hard to forecast where we will be and what our circumstances will be some 20 years from now. But it is absolutely critical that we get on and start it.

For me, this is an example—a description—of what true leadership is. It's why I think I came into this House: an opportunity to put forward bold ideas that are absolutely necessary to move the province forward. I want to thank the Premier of Ontario for the leadership she is showing on this file, and I want to thank the finance minister for the leadership he is showing on the file to put in place the programs that have been identified by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change as absolutely necessary for Ontario to meet its commitment



internationally, nationally and throughout North America. This is an absolutely critical thing for us to do.

We also know that previous leaders of the Liberal Party federally—Stéphane Dion, who was elected, I believe, in 2006 to lead the Liberal Party of Canada, got this piece almost a decade ago. He understood how important it was, and he made the pitch to the people of Canada that it's absolutely important that we get ahead of the game on this. He also tied in very carefully the economic opportunities that the new carbon economy, a low-carbon economy, would have for our economic well-being.

He understood it back then, but, dare I say, maybe he was 10 years too early. He was 10 years too early because we hadn't been experiencing the dramatic economic costs associated with the extreme weather that we've been experiencing of late. We hadn't experienced five years of drought in California, which is dramatically impacting the capacity of that state, which supplies to Ontario so much of our fresh fruit and vegetables, particularly off-season. We hadn't experienced that 10 years ago, but we are experiencing it now.

What you can see is that consumers who are out doing simple things like buying a head of cauliflower—the symbolic value that a head of cauliflower has had in the climate change debate is incredible. People were going to the grocery store, and what they used to pay \$1.69 or \$2.69 for—a nice head of white cauliflower coming from California—is suddenly costing upwards of \$8 in places because of the drought and because of shortened supply. So people are experiencing the impacts of climate change in their pockets, and that's why they're now getting the picture.

0910

I'm pleased to say that I think the public is very much on side with us on this measure. I got a tweet yesterday from a good friend of mine, Michael Polanyi. Michael and I grew up together. I knew his father, who you would know as Dr. John Polanyi, a great Canadian, a great scientist, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry. Dr. Polanyi and his wife, Sue—we used to meet annually at a Christmas adventure down in south Rosedale with a friend of mine, Hugh Mackenzie's mother, Sheila Mackenzie. She would put on an annual event called St. Thorlak's. It was basically a hymn sing to celebrate Christmas, to celebrate the season. Sue Polanyi would be on the piano playing hymns and we'd all sing along. Michael Polanyi and I got to know each other. He's somewhat younger than I am, but we got to know each other in those days, and he has resurfaced as a constituent in my riding of Beaches—East York. He's resurfaced with the group known as the Citizens' Climate Lobby.

The Citizens' Climate Lobby have been in to see me and they've seen so many other members. They've had events down here, and I know members on the opposition benches have also had a chance to speak with the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Michael Polanyi shared with me a map with every single riding across Canada, the ones that all of us represent in our own discrete parts of Ontario. It's a riding map where you could push a button,

push on the touchscreen and it will tell you, from a whole series of polling that's been done, the percentage of who is absolutely on side, the percentage of people on side in regions across this country, in regions across the province who are on side with climate change mitigation measures. Most importantly, he showed me how in Beaches—East York, the community he lives in, 87% of people in Beaches—East York—so 140,000 people—believe the world is heating up in a dramatic way and are concerned about it—87%. Well over 70% believe it's absolutely essential to put a price on carbon. They support the cap-and-trade program. I would invite all members of the House to find—maybe you're following me on Twitter and you'll get the link easily that way.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Oh yeah, we'll go on that right now.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** You should. You should go and find out how many in your own community understand the circumstances that we are in, because it is absolutely important that you recognize—I know none of us want to be on the wrong side of public opinion. It's an important political motivator, but we also know that we want to do the right thing.

Sometimes, as we experienced with people's response to us modernizing the management of Hydro One—optimizing, leveraging the assets in Hydro One in order to put it on a sounder management footing, in order to take those assets and reinvest them in a better asset management program—we know that that hasn't been on side with the public but it's the right thing to do, and I'm confident, come the time when people go to the polls in 2018, they will recognize that it was the right thing to do, that they will have seen it. And although I'm concerned when municipalities across the province are putting in resolutions opposing the partial sale, I also know those same municipalities are coming to see me and asking me for infrastructure dollars. They're asking me for everything from bridge repairs to road work and sewage infrastructure upgrades. They're asking me about gas lines in rural Ontario.

I know that it's important to them that they get infrastructure renewal and I think they are finally starting to put together the piece of the puzzle that says it ain't coming if we can't finance it, and we're not going to finance it by extending our borrowing capacity even further than it's at now, so we're going to leverage assets like we did with General Motors shares, like we did selling off real estate that's no longer in the public's interest to hold, such as the LCBO head office. That is money you can reinvest as an asset in a better asset, and whether it's regional express rail or these bridges and stuff, it's absolutely critically important.

I know that Stéphane Dion had a vision, and he was defeated by it. He was defeated by it because the opposition parties made it so difficult, or they sold the simplistic argument that this is a job-killing tax, which it's not. They convinced the people because—and you see it already now, Speaker. You see it in the kinds of questions we're getting from the opposition, that the



4.3% increase projected on the cost of gasoline is a job-killing type of tax, where the reality is that every other jurisdiction, such as BC and Quebec—California I've already spoken a bit about. California put in cap-and-trade measures and lo and behold, yes, there was an increase in the cost associated with fuel, heating fuels, but there was an increase in productivity, in new jobs, in job creation, in GDP growth, and I'll talk a little bit more about that later.

We've seen the fact that it's easy to be critical of this proposal if you take the very simplistic notion that some costs will go up. You've got to frame the debate in the context that a lot of other costs are going to go down, particularly costs associated with renovating your house, for instance. I'm pleased to say that last night I spent my first night in my new house. I know members of this House will be delighted to know that I've finally moved into my own riding.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you very much.

My partner, Lisa Martin, and I bought a house last June. It's a beautiful old house in upper Beaches. It was built in 1870, and it's a classic, beautiful, old Victorian house. We went in, and it was a disaster inside. It had been a rooming house. So we had to gut it to the walls. Incredibly—well, maybe not so incredibly; it was built in 1870—not a stitch of insulation in the whole thing, nothing. I am convinced that our heating costs associated with that renovation will be reduced, probably by 60%, maybe 70%. So we gutted it to the walls, rebuilt it, put in spray foam insulation, very thick. We put LED lighting in. We did all the things that we can now do with a financing program administered through our funds that will be acquired through the cap-and-trade. We will allow homeowners to go forward. Now, of course, my renovation happened before the program was in place, so I won't be able to benefit from it, but all of you will be when you have the chance to renovate.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It should be retroactive.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It should be retroactive. Maybe we could have the opposition members put in a motion or an amendment to that effect, to make it retroactive. I did it because I wanted to live in a house that was solid, secure and environmentally sensible, and so we did all that work. We are still heating with gas. It was a brand new gas furnace, and I really contemplated whether to just scrap an almost brand new furnace—it was the only thing in the house that was decent—and then do something different that would be more environmentally sustainable, like ground-source heat pumping, because there, really, is the solution: to get off gas, which is a carbon-emitting program, and go to something much more passive like ground-source heating.

I actually had to take down a tree that was in the back, Speaker, an old Manitoba maple that was, like, 12 feet in diameter. It was huge. It was all rotten and falling apart. We took it down, and now I've got a big stump, a huge stump in the backyard. We're still waiting for the guy to come back when it's no longer frozen to dig it out. I

recognize now that I'm going to have a hole in my backyard that's going to be about six to eight feet deep once they remove all of this root. If I were to take that and extend that hole, make it a little bigger, I could put—

**Mr. Grant Crack:** A swimming pool.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** —a swimming pool. I was thinking more about a reservoir, where I could put glycol or some other liquid, which could then circulate through piping into the furnace area of my house with a heat exchanger, and for the price of a small circulating pump and the little bit of electricity associated with that, a heat exchanger, I could remove any necessity for an air conditioning system in my house. All the costs associated with air conditioning would disappear because you would be taking the ambient temperature of the earth, which I think stands at about 53 degrees, as a baseload which goes through heat exchange. In the wintertime when it's 20 degrees or 10 degrees outside, it brings it up—heat exchange. So a circulating pump keeps you at ambient temperature. Likewise in the summer, when it's 85 degrees out—I'm using Fahrenheit because I'm not doing the translations, having been brought up in the old system. Younger people like the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell can do the centigrade translations faster.

In the summertime, I know that with a ground-source heat pump I could avoid using air conditioning and keep my house at a comfortable temperature without really expending very much energy at all. That's the focus of the flip side of, yes, it's going to cost you a little bit more to use your car; it's going to cost you a little bit more to heat your house with gasoline or with gas. The flip side is that you're going to be able to do other things.

**0920**

I sat with a number of mayors from the Bruce Peninsula area about three months ago and they were making a pitch to me, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in my rural affairs capacity. They were making the pitch to me why that community should be getting gas lines faster than other communities, how imperative it was that we build the gas infrastructure up there. One of the mayors looked at me; he said that he was in a constituent's house, and he said, "It's so expensive to heat with electricity. The cold air is blowing in under the doors. There's no insulation in the walls, so it's expensive to heat with electricity."

I looked and said, "Why don't you put in a renovation program? Why don't you help people reduce their energy costs, the high price of electricity, by putting in a renovation program?" The city of Toronto has done it. They had a free audit program that they did. The city would loan you money against your heating bill with Toronto Hydro in order to renovate your house to reduce the use of electricity, to reduce the use of fossil fuels to heat.

What we know is coming out of this bill is an opportunity, with a large capital pool, to have people apply and put in these kinds of necessary measures. In rural communities, for the purpose of home heating, ground-source heat pump opportunities are a fantastic way to go. It's almost counterproductive for us to be thinking about put-



ting gas in every home across the province because now we're going down this whole route of more emissions. I get the fact that equality demands that rural Ontario should be treated as equally as the downtown urban cores as we possibly can. I get that, and I understand why. But if we could help people in rural Ontario who don't have access to gas to reduce their heating bills by 50% or 60% by putting in proper insulation, by putting in good windows and the rest of it, it would go a long way to solving the concerns that all of you here, on both sides of the House, are hearing from your constituents about the high cost of electricity.

I was really hoping that we could have had a debate in this House on this measure, on this bill, which wouldn't fall into the partisan opposition-government type of framework, because this is, as I said, a transformational piece that we have to get right. I understand how the opposition needs to be there to provide opposition, but what I'm hoping we hear from the other side are ways that we can ameliorate the plan—not be against the plan, but fix it, make it even better.

This is like the War Measures Act, in my mind. This is like people standing up in 1939 in the House of Commons and saying, unanimously, "We need to do what's necessary to stop what's happening in Europe. We need to put ourselves forward." This is in the same vein as that. This is the kind of bill where all of us should be joining together in a rallying cry to support this kind of initiative so that your children and your children's children, and the next generation after that, can live in a community that is not so devastated by climate change initiatives.

I'm really honoured, Speaker, to have the chance to do this. I spent the last 25 years of my life before I came here as a consultant doing government relations work, doing company-to-company work and doing a lot of work in environmental communities. I'm not sure if I mentioned it in, as I like to call it, my rookie speech. I think I mentioned that I used to drive a car, an old Mercedes diesel, on vegetable oil from a restaurant in my neighbourhood. It was a 1981 Mercedes 300D.

As you all probably know, because you're well versed in these things, Rudolf Diesel invented the diesel motor to run on peanut oil. When he was in South America and he was exploring, he saw South American natives taking peanut oil in a bamboo tube, and they would pound it. They would pound the oil, and the pressure of cracking the oil would create a spark. He was like, "My god, I could make an engine out of this," if he could systematize that pounding. That's the origin of the diesel motor. So the diesel motor was designed to run on vegetable oil.

Only with the advent of us digging up and drilling and getting oil out of the ground—that top 1% becomes lubricating oil and the next 10% to 12% is used as gasoline. But the remaining—the crude, the bunker crude, type 2 or 3, whatever—is a bit of a waste product. They determined that a diesel motor will run on almost anything. You can run naphtha in it; you can run regular gasoline in it; you can run bunker diesel; you can run vegetable oil of all different sorts.

I was using used french-fry oil from a restaurant. I literally would go up to the back of the restaurant. Once a week, they'd put out 15 litres from cleaning out their french fryer, and I would take it, take the top off and pour it through a strainer to get the bits and pieces out, because you don't want to run your car on pieces of chicken fingers and french fries and such. It ran beautifully. In fact, it didn't just run beautifully; it ran better than running on diesel. It ran better because vegetable oil has an extra oxygen molecule in it, so it has a higher combustion at a lower pressure rate.

You know when you start up a diesel motor and you get that cloud of black smoke out the back? If you put biodiesel or vegetable oil in your tank, you actually remove that black spurt of smoke coming out. This is why there's a whole effort now to create more biodiesel in the community.

I worked with a company which was out of Oakville, but now they have a plant in Hamilton, called Biox Corp. I was assisting them in their dealings with municipalities at the time. Biox Corp. had a plan to take all the used vegetable oil they could collect across the province and make biodiesel. Taking out the glycerin makes it a cleaner-burning fuel. But I didn't bother taking out the glycerin. I just poured the vegetable oil straight into the car and ran off with it. As a result, the car did smell a bit like french fries and popcorn. I used to joke with my kids that if you drive it down the street, the dogs are going to run after you because they think there's food in it. But it worked, and it worked beautifully.

I worked with Biox, and now they're producing 60 million litres a year of biodiesel in Hamilton, in a continuous process that they invented with the assistance of the University of Toronto engineering faculty. It was difficult to make biodiesel, because it was a batch process which was very time-consuming and very expensive. They do it continuously now, and it makes an incredible product. Again, because it's a renewable fuel from corn, soy or whatever, it is far more sustainable than it is from digging it out of the ground.

I also worked with a company out of Israel, Arrow technologies. ArrowBio technologies had an anaerobic digestion system for garbage separation. What they would do was take mixed garbage and stick it in a vat of water. Plastics would float and heavies would sink. Everything that was left in solution tended to be organic, and you could mulch that up, anaerobically digest it, create methane and use the methane for power. This has an incredible impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because that material would otherwise get into a landfill stream, where it would degrade and create methane unless you captured it all effectively, and would exhaust into the atmosphere, which is bad. So it was another win.

This is the kind of thing that I was doing as a consultant over the years, so it's tremendous for me to be here with an opportunity where I have a chance to speak to this particular bill.

I've also worked in the Blue Box Program, trying to expand the amount of paper that's collected in the Blue



Box Program so that we're not just collecting magazines and newspapers. We've expanded the blue box now to collect boxboard, cardboard, wrapping paper, and soft-cover and hardcover textbooks, all of which can be mulched and put back into productive paper. That saves trees, and it saves the costs of transportation associated with going to get those trees and bringing the trees and the pulp to the manufacturing. It's a huge saving in greenhouse gas emissions.

Because of that background and that experience, I think that's why the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has asked me to provide opening lead remarks on this bill.

I would like to talk a little bit more about the bill specifically. We know that the costs of climate change are adding up. The costs of inaction far exceed the cost of us taking action, and it's absolutely critical that we get that point.

A 2015 Citigroup study found that the costs, in terms of lost GDP, from not acting on climate change could be upwards of \$44 trillion by the year 2060. That is absolutely staggering, if you put it in context. If you think about what we've experienced so far—and Premier Wynne has said that climate change represents the single greatest threat to our health and prosperity today and for generations to come.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** The members opposite can heckle and not want to take this issue seriously, but, Speaker, they need to get and grasp the severity and the seriousness of this situation, because we are seeing impacts in Ontario communities and their local economies.

0930

The United Nations World Meteorological Organization tells us that 2015 was likely the hottest year on record. Certainly, the last five years have been the hottest five-year period on record. Some locations in southern Ontario could see a 3.5-degree Celsius rise in mean summer temperature and a four-degree rise in winter. Models predict that by 2050, southern Ontario's humid, continental climate will feel more like the humid, subtropical climate of the state of Kentucky.

One of the things that we are seeing in climate change is that we are starting to experience climate realities that are more associated with southern climes such as Kentucky. Areas of the midwestern US are becoming arid and drier and starting to have more desert-like conditions.

There's a writer by the name of James Lovelock, a great scientist who understood how CFCs were getting into the atmosphere and destroying the ozone layer. He was the first to blow the whistle on that many, many decades ago. He's been tracking the climate conditions. I read his book a number of years ago called *The Revenge of Gaia*. He identified this concept of Gaia, that the Earth is a living mechanism, almost a sentient being—maybe the prime being—and that the Earth has the capacity to react and respond to climate issues or things affecting it and to take out the detractors.

He has a sort of non-anthropological view of the world, where the human being is not the most important

thing. He will smugly say that the world is going to take care of you guys, because you're the guys that are destroying the climate and the world will take care. He says, in a sense, that it's not so important to even try to get ahead of the climate changing, because we're too far gone. He thinks the most important thing that we should be doing as legislators is to better understand the migration patterns that are going to come with this; to better understand how our immigration from the midwest US states into Canada is going to cause incredible dislocation of peoples. Because their land will not be habitable; ours will be more habitable, but maybe not as habitable as it currently is.

His view of the world is as an organic, responding being. If you think about a tree—those of us who have agricultural interests in our portfolios or in our communities know that when plants don't get the sustenance, the liquids they need, the leaves will start to curl up. They'll respond in a way to try to protect their core being in the hope that new rain will come and that the leaves will open up again. That's kind of how the world is responding to the heat right now. The capacity of the world to control it—it's contracting and holding itself in, and at some point, a critical mass gets hit and you have an incredibly quick, downward spiral, because the plant dies. That's what we need to be guarding against: the plant dying, which is the world dying, and making it uninhabitable for all of us.

The situation is even more dire in the Far North. Mean winter temperatures will likely rise by as much as eight degrees by 2030 due to climate change. The communities in the north, with 24,000 people, mostly First Nations and aboriginal people making up almost 90% of the population—they are in remote communities that can only be reached by plane and winter roads. What we are seeing is that with those winter roads, because the permafrost isn't freezing early enough and long enough, we're not able to get truckloads of supplies into these outward communities, making them unreachable, possibly uninhabitable, or so incredibly expensive to live in because everything will have to be flown in—construction materials in addition to fresh produce etc. Thirty-one of the 34 communities in the Far North—about 21,000 people—depend on about 3,100 kilometres of roads, and these are disappearing.

Churchill, Manitoba, recently announced that they've had a huge influx of polar bears. It's becoming an unmanageable population—a threefold increase in the polar bears coming into the city looking for food. This is a direct result of local climate change, because the ice floes aren't sustained long enough for the polar bears to get seal meat and fatten up for the winter months. They're coming into communities, where they're trapped, housed in polar bear jails and then relocated. It's just another example. Climate change is so real that we have to take action in order to pause it and stop it from getting worse.

There is a widespread recognition among countries that we are running out of time. The global community has identified the objective of holding the increase in



global temperatures to well below two degrees Celsius in order to stop the most devastating impacts of climate change. This is a very conservative estimate. The question is, how many megatonnes of carbon are we going to allow to get into the atmosphere? There is a broad consensus that carbon pricing, such as the cap-and-trade system, is a key tool for reducing greenhouse gases and driving a prosperous, low-carbon, high productivity economy. Now, there are two basic systems that one can look at for pricing carbons. I talked earlier about the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Their push was for what is known as a tax-and-dividend system, more what has happened in BC, where you do put a tax on carbon fuels, gasoline, natural gas etc., and everybody pays that. Then you just give everybody a dividend cheque back, which splits up the proceeds of all the money you got for that and you split it up equally amongst the population, in essence. So those people who are using carbon excessively are paying for it.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** You're not doing that.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm not suggesting I'm doing it. If the members want to listen, we'll get to that.

There are two systems; one is the BC system. The theory there is that people are incentivized to get off carbon—maybe instead of taking their car to work they'll take their bicycle—so that they won't be paying that extra dollar, that extra seven cents it actually works out to in BC, on their fuel, but they're still getting the full benefit of it. So maybe those who are driving a car will take their money and invest it in a bicycle. But we are taking the different approach of cap-and-trade because we believe we're going to get far better carbon reductions through a cap-and-trade program. They're guaranteed because you set targets and you reach those targets.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, this is also an extraordinarily economic thing for us to be doing. For each \$100 million that we would invest in Ontario in climate-related technologies, we would generate over \$107 million in gross domestic product increases, \$25 million in federal and provincial tax revenues, creating about 1,400 new jobs—for each \$100 million invested. So it's very important that we recognize that the flip side of us putting a tax on carbon or putting a price on carbon is that we will be creating jobs in the economy.

In 2015, the World Bank's State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2015 report stated that 39 nations, 23 cities, states and regions have now implemented scheduled prices on carbon. In Canada, that includes British Columbia, as I mentioned, Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba, and now Ontario is following. Once these programs are implemented, almost 90% of Canadians will then live in a province with some form of carbon pricing. Globally, jurisdictions with carbon pricing cover seven gigatonnes of emissions: 12% of annual global emissions. That's a threefold increase over the past decade. So it's not like we're the first ones out of the gate on this, although maybe we should have been. This is a trend happening globally worldwide, and we don't want to be the last out of the gate on this. Taking action now, again, is absolutely im-

perative. China, for instance, recently announced that it too will implement a national cap-and-trade program in 2017, building off seven regional pilot projects that have been operating since 2013.

Our government has demonstrated leadership and commitment to fighting climate change through a series of very bold measures. We've ended stand-alone coal-fired electricity generation in the province, which is one of the largest greenhouse gas reduction initiatives in North America. The Minister of Finance, in his budget speech last week, talked about the fact that taking coal-fired generation stations off-line has resulted in there being no smog days. The health savings alone associated with that were immense and important and, again, demonstrated why it was absolutely the right thing to do.

**0940**

We are also, Speaker, as you know, through our regional express rail, improving regional transit networks. I'm pleased to say that today, coming from my new house and location at Main and Danforth, I was able to easily walk up to the subway and across here. It was equally convenient to get on the subway at my last location at Logan and Danforth, but now in my own community it was great to be able to walk up there and meet some constituents en route and come down here by subway. I bought a Metropass today, Speaker, because I know the system is improving and it will be an opportunity for us to go across regional express rail from London and St. Catharines and Uxbridge and Stouffville. That's happening and, once electrified, that will be the most significant change in carbon emissions in our economy. So these are the kinds of bold acts we'll be doing, but we still have much to do.

With this proposed legislation, we will be establishing a stronger, long-term legal framework for climate action in Ontario. The proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act will enshrine Ontario's greenhouse gas reduction targets in law. It will require regular action plans dealing with how we make progress towards achieving those targets and will establish a strong legal foundation for a cap-and-trade program.

I would like to explain some of the key elements in the act in some greater detail. Targets, for instance: We now know that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is vital to fighting climate change, so Ontario will be setting a target for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions relative to its 1990 levels. We have committed to a 15% reduction by 2020, a 37% reduction by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050.

The proposed act will enshrine these targets in the legislation. It includes enabling provisions that will enable the Lieutenant Governor to increase the existing targets or to add additional interim targets by regulation, but it will prohibit any future government, without changing the law, from lowering those targets.

Another key element of the proposed legislation is the development of an action plan. The bill requires our government to prepare and publish a climate action plan. The plan will detail actions to be taken that will enable

Ontario to meet our emissions reduction targets. The bill sets out what will be required in the action plan. This will include information about each action, and it requires a timetable for implementation, an estimate of the potential emissions sought to be gained and an assessment of the cost per ton of those reductions. If an action could be funded in whole or in part from cap-and-trade proceeds, then the plan will include the estimated amount of such funding that is being considered.

Under this proposed legislation, the plan could be revised at any time and must be renewed every five years. The bill also requires that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change publish a progress report every five years. So providing detailed descriptions of government actions, including the use of cap-and-trade proceeds and the impact on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reporting on our progress: These are part of our commitment to transparency in the proposed legislation.

So, Speaker, in April 2015, Ontario announced it will join the cap-and-trade systems under the Western Climate Initiative. By doing so, we will be working with other jurisdictions, including Quebec and California, in making carbon pricing a cornerstone in our fight against climate change. The bill before this Legislature provides a strong foundation for Ontario's cap-and-trade program and establishes its framework for implementation. The proposed legislation provides provisions for agreements to link Ontario's cap-and-trade program with those in other jurisdictions, such as the Western Climate Initiative's.

Our government has included a number of elements in the proposed legislation to ensure accountability and transparency. The act requires an annual report of funds flowing in and out of the greenhouse gas reduction account, a dedicated account of all proceeds from assessments, from our trading of carbon credits, to be used for climate change initiatives. It will also require the government to publish a report on the use of cap-and-trade proceeds, which will be invested in projects that specifically reduce greenhouse gas pollution. It also requires government to develop a climate change action plan detailing how the province will meet its reduction targets every five years.

Now, Speaker, this is not the first time that we put a price or put limits on how much we allow industries to pollute. Years ago, I had the pleasure of working with an incredible gentleman by the name of Gary Gallon. Gary Gallon, one of the founders of Pollution Probe, was chief of staff to the Minister of the Environment many years ago, in the 1980s, when they brought in the acid rain plan. Our lakes, our fish, our livable waters were being destroyed by acid rain. We put a price, we put limits on the amount of acid that industry could spew into the atmosphere, and as a result we have reversed that process. This again is not new, but the scale and the magnitude to which we are doing it with respect to carbon emissions is immense. It's imperative that we get that piece right.

We also want to ensure that there is proper oversight on our cap-and-trade market. Being a member of the

Western Climate Initiative, Ontario has a non-profit corporation which provides administrative and technical services to support greenhouse gas emission trading programs for its member jurisdictions. We have worked with other initiative members, including California and Quebec, and our cap-and-trade oversight rules align with Quebec's and California's to ensure consistency once all programs are linked. The Western Climate Initiative also requires the services of a market monitor to ensure jurisdictions have enough information to ensure that emitters are complying with cap-and-trade requirements. Offenders who don't comply will be prosecuted under Ontario laws and, if convicted, will face fines.

We also have great concerns for our First Nations and Métis people. The bill specifically acknowledged that the First Nations and Métis communities have a special relationship with the environment and are deeply connected, spiritually and culturally, to the land, the water, the air and the animals. This bill includes a provision that requires the minister to consider any traditional ecological knowledge a community may offer in respect to the action plan that the government is required to prepare. So we'll be working in consultation with our First Nations communities in gaining experience and intelligence from how they view and interact with our natural world. The bill also includes a provision making it clear that nothing in the bill is intended to take away from the protections provided for aboriginal and treaty rights in the Canadian Constitution. The provision is intended to signify respect for those rights and is not intended to impact the interpretation or protection of those rights in the context of this bill.

Speaker, taking robust action on climate change will not weaken our economy; in fact, it can serve as a crucial leader for stronger growth in the province of Ontario. Nations around the world are making deep emissions cuts in the coming years, and global demand for cleaner technologies, energy, infrastructure and better low-carbon solutions will rise sharply. Through smart investments and actions, we have an exciting opportunity to take advantage of trillions of dollars—some estimating as much as \$7 trillion in the global economy per year—an opportunity way greater than the technological revolutions of the past 15 years. We will make our province more productive, efficient and prosperous.

We've heard questions from the opposition, again, detailing the costs associated with carbon pricing, the cost of gasoline, the cost of natural gas and such. But what they should also be celebrating is that the impact of carbon pricing will have no impact on electricity rates. You need to understand, critically, why that's the case: because over 95%—95%—of our electricity in this province is generated carbon-free. So putting a price on carbon doesn't affect electricity rates because Ontario, over the past 10 years, has done some very heavy lifting in getting off of carbon-based coal; for instance, reducing the amount of dependency on gas power plants at peak demand by bringing in sustainable programs—wind and energy. And while I appreciate that those programs have



added to the cost of the bills, it is an investment that we've made. We are over the hump of those investments in terms of their impact on electricity rates.

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When we look at our competing jurisdictions around North America, in the US, where 60% to 80% of electrical power is being generated by carbon sources, particularly coal, they haven't done that heavy lifting. When they get hit with the costs associated with carbon initiatives, our electrical pricing becomes relatively so much less expensive that we will continue to be able to compete in North American markets far more effectively. It's very important that we understand that as a result of what we're doing here, it doesn't affect the price of electricity. In fact, our modelling suggests that it will result in a very slight downward pressure on electricity pricing.

Speaker, we will be taking robust action on climate change that will not be weakening our economy. We can look to California to see the impact of what implementing cap-and-trade has on the economy, because cap-and-trade has been very good for that state's economy. During the past two years, California's overall economic growth was higher than the national average, and the state's green economy grew even faster. California added almost half a million jobs—3.3% growth, compared to the national average growth rate of only 2.5%—and they have a carbon economy. They are the largest jurisdiction in the US to have implemented a carbon economy, and it's working for them. Gross domestic product increased by over 2%, breaking the link between emissions and economic growth. What's good for the environment in carbon pricing is actually good for the economy.

What's more, California has received more clean technology venture capital since the signing of its Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006. Between 2006 and 2013, clean technology venture capital investments were \$21 billion in California, versus only \$19 billion in the entire rest of the United States of America. In essence, California has cornered the market on green economy investment. This is a very important piece to take note of, because Ontario is positioning itself to be in exactly the same place.

Carbon pricing has also been good for British Columbia's economy. According to a recent review by Duke University and the University of Ottawa, BC's carbon tax has been an economic and environmental success. Models suggest that taxes reduced emissions in the province by 5% to 15%. At the same time, the model shows that the taxes had negligible effects on aggregate economic performance, though certain emissions types have faced some challenges. Studies reviewed differed on the effects of the carbon tax initiative, but agreed the effects are very small.

There are more examples of successful carbon pricing across North America. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a market-based regulatory program by nine northeastern states in the US, and its purpose is to cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity

generation sector. Detailed economic modelling of the initiative's second three-year compliance period found that the program generated a net economic benefit of US\$1.3 billion for the region over this period.

Who wouldn't want to get on this train? We're going to be creating jobs, creating economic wealth and developing technologies in Ontario, for Ontario, by Ontarians. Proceeds during the three-year period were nearly US\$1 billion, and the large majority of this was reinvested by states in programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about carbon leakage, which I know is an issue of great concern to the opposition parties. Leakage refers to the risk that a business would leave a jurisdiction with carbon pricing and set up in a jurisdiction without carbon pricing. Carbon leakage is a concern not just for the economy, but also for the environment, because it just moves greenhouse emissions to a different jurisdiction rather than helping reduce them. We all know the motive: Think globally but act locally. Because global carbon emissions don't know trade boundaries and don't know political boundaries, emissions in the US are just as bad for us as emissions in Ontario.

It is in every Ontarian's interest to have a strong, healthy, clean and robust industrial and manufacturing sector, so the province is now going to provide some free allowances to industries to help them transition to low-carbon technology while they reduce their greenhouse gas pollution. A number of allowances, determined by a declining cap, are not affected if a portion is provided free instead of being sold. It is our way of providing proper balance to assist industry with the transformation that has to happen.

Ontario's proposed approach to cap-and-trade strikes the right balance between reducing greenhouse pollution and fostering economic growth. If costs and timelines of implementing cap-and-trade are too onerous, companies will move production to facilities outside the province. We recognize it and we're taking steps to ensure that doesn't happen.

Our approach is very consistent with how California and Quebec successfully phased in their cap-and-trade programs. During the first compliance period, the province will assess its approach to providing free allowances in subsequent phases of the program. I know that under Ontario's cap-and-trade program design options, fuel suppliers will not receive allowances free of charge. Ontario is only proposing free allowances for business and industries that are emissions-intensive and that are trade-exposed.

Household costs are of great concern to all Ontarians. I've spoken a bit about it in the home renovation program. Let me just say more, though. Ontarians will want to know about the potential impact. While prices of some things such as home heating and gas could increase, Ontarians will take advantage of climate-change-fighting initiatives such as energy retrofits, public transit and electrical vehicle incentives, and this will actually see that their overall costs will go down.

The cost of buying a Chevy Volt is I think about \$19,000, and under the program, it's my understanding that upwards of \$14,000 will be provided to someone buying a Chevy Volt. So you can go out and get yourself a \$5,000 brand new car because it's emissions-free. People should think about that. If you want to trade in your old gas clunker, your big pickup truck—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I think you better check your numbers.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'll check my numbers on that, but that's my understanding.

At the very least, we do know that if you're going to buy an electric vehicle, a good portion of that expenditure will be covered off by the proceeds of our cap-and-trade system.

Ontario is investing \$31 billion into a plan that will, among other things, make public transit an easier and more convenient option for people. We are also putting in place infrastructure to make cycling in our communities safer and more convenient. I know that's of great interest to my colleague from the town of—

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Burlington.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Burlington. I was going to say Brampton.

Drivers will also receive incentives to buy electric vehicles. Those who drive electric vehicles will be able to cut down their commute times by having unrestricted access to high-occupancy vehicle lanes no matter how many passengers are in the vehicle. It's important also to note that recent trends in gas prices have decreased fuel costs so that between 2014 and 2016, average prices in Ontario have decreased by 34 cents per litre. We're adding 4.3 on the estimates of what it will cost suppliers—not a huge amount compared to where gas prices were two years ago.

Through the Green Investment Fund, Ontario is committing \$100 million to help about 37,000 homeowners conduct audits to identify energy saving opportunities and then complete those retrofits.

I talked to you about the happy story in my house. Actually, there's another happy story in my house. In the course of finishing my renovation, I discovered that the federal government has an HST rebate program based on substantial renovations of the house, particularly where you're bringing in all these energy retrofits. So I will be able to qualify for an HST rebate, maxed out at about \$16,000. I'm very pleased with that initiative. Its motive is in the right place: to encourage people to fix their homes up and make them more energy efficient.

The Ontario program will help house owners replace furnaces and water heaters and upgrade insulation. It will also help spur innovation and create jobs in clean energy industries, for instance in ground-source heat pumps.

The province is also investing \$92 million to retrofit social housing buildings and single-family homes. The retrofits could include installing energy-efficient boilers, insulating walls, mechanical systems and installing more energy-efficient windows and lighting. Businesses and consumers that take no action and continue to pollute will

spend more on things like transportation, fuels and natural gas, while those who take steps to reduce emissions will avoid cost increases for carbon pricing.

The money raised through cap-and-trade will be invested in a transparent way into programs that further reduce greenhouse gas pollution, such as public transit, families consuming less energy, and helping factories and businesses reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

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We can now look at the experience of consumers in Quebec and California following the introduction of cap-and-trade legislation in those jurisdictions. It's estimated that the price of gas increased between two and three and a half cents a litre in California and Quebec due to their programs. While these jurisdictions have not seen significant increases in natural gas prices, we are sensitive to the cost and we are working hard to deliver a program that works for consumers and industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address the potential impacts to industry under cap-and-trade. Facilities covered directly by a cap-and-trade program will not have to purchase allowances for the natural gas that they use. As I mentioned, our analysts anticipate a slight increase in the cost of natural gas and transportation fuel when the program is implemented. However, recent trends in prices have decreased, leaving industry fuel costs significantly reduced. Putting a price on greenhouse gas pollution is about encouraging businesses and consumers to pollute less by reducing their reliance on carbon-intensive programs.

Our proposed legislation builds on consultation with industry, businesses, environmental and indigenous leaders across the province and the public on how to best combat climate change and implement a cap-and-trade program. As a first step towards the development of Ontario's Climate Change Strategy, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change released a discussion paper in February 2015 proposing a path forward and guiding principles. We engaged Ontarians in a province-wide dialogue. The ministry held 15 community stakeholder dialogues across the province, with more than 1,200 individuals and 200 businesses and organizations attending.

The province also held a series of engagements with First Nations and Métis organizations. We received over 31,000 submissions through an online consultation tool, as well as over 500 comments on the discussion papers. We know we've been out to the public. We've got their feedback. The polling that has been done that I referenced earlier shows that the public wants us to take concerted action on climate change, and we've consulted with them.

So I go back to my initial plea to all members of this House that we rise up in unanimity to the concept of putting forward this cap-and-trade legislation, that we seek the intelligence of all members of this House through your consultations in your own communities on how we can make it better. I challenge every member, on the other side of the House particularly, to give us workable



solutions that fall in line with the general principles of what we're trying to do, because it's the right thing to do, and it's the right thing to do now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's a pleasure to offer a balanced approach to the tax—pardon me, a Freudian slip—cap-and-trade scheme that this Liberal government is introducing, because the fact of the matter is, we've heard from stakeholders left, right and centre about their concerns.

I think it's pretty rich that the member opposite is focusing and suggesting that the cost of electricity will not go up. We all know that when turbines are not turning in Ontario, natural gas plants—remember the gas plant scandal—are to replace and help out in peak demand, and if you don't think they're going to pass that cost of production along the value chain to the end consumer, you are sorely mistaken.

I really want to touch on, in my two minutes, something that's very important to discuss, and that is the notion that this government would dare suggest that anyone other than themselves isn't going to do the right thing around climate change. This is where we stand up and say, stop the partisan ways, because we all know climate change is a very serious issue. But guess what? The methodology and the path forward is where we will divide, Speaker. We feel that we need to point out all that is wrong with the Liberal cap-and-trade scheme while balancing the importance of addressing climate change and making sure we listen and consult with stakeholders so that we get it right. We need to care for the environment, absolutely, but in doing so, in tandem we're also going to be treating Ontarians and Ontario businesses fairly, and that is the paramount focus for us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's always a joy to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin and hear the comments from the member from Beaches-East York. I'm very pleased to hear that he goes out and talks to his constituents, as he should. As an elected member—there are 107 of us who are here—it's always a privilege being here, and the day we forget that is the day it's time to step away from this place.

A good friend of mine, who served in previous years as a minister and a good representative and MPP for the Algoma riding, as it was then, Mr. Bud Wildman, jumped into my mind this morning. He used to always tease me about using a phrase. I will call a canard on you, my friend, because of some of the stuff that you brought up this morning. You used words like "optimization" and "modernization," as far as what happened with Hydro One. I am sorry; we have different words that we use in northern Ontario in order to describe what the Liberal government did with that, some of them which are not going to go on the record this morning.

But I just want to let you know some of the engagements that I have had with people from across Algoma-

Manitoulin. You talked about having options available to you and to your constituents in your area. Let me talk to you about the options that we have in northern Ontario, particularly with the cap-and-trade that is being imposed. We have always requested that it be fair, that it be transparent, and that it be equitable across the province for people.

Let me talk to you about the options that we have. First, we don't have an option for transit in northern Ontario. Second, we don't have GO trains. The trains that we had, you took them away. The rail that was there is no longer there, and the bus routes are being reduced by 50%. Those are the options that you've taken away from northern Ontario. So when you look at options and when you look at the increases in fuel prices, home expenses and everything, that's the message that's coming to me. That's a reality for people in northern Ontario.

They are not connected to this budget. I am very sorry but you need to listen—as well as being part of government—to the rest of the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'm delighted to take part in this vigorous conversation this morning about a very important issue; in fact, arguably the most important issue facing humanity right now: climate change. I'm delighted to follow my colleague, the very knowledgeable member from Beaches-East York, and to join the member from Huron-Bruce and the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

The last member, from Algoma-Manitoulin, was talking about things that we can embrace together. At least, that's what I took from your comments. I know that he is a vigorous supporter of a cycling network in Ontario because in his very riding there are upgrades to same.

Of course, I'm proud to not only have been a cycling advocate prior to arriving in this place, but to have worked to develop the #CycleON strategy. My colleague, my neighbour here, the member for Cambridge and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, led a conversation yesterday among cycling groups and the Ministry of Transportation about the vigorous and continued investment that's going to be required in our province to make cycling easier and more convenient.

Right now, of course, 135,000 people a day, according to estimates, are riding their bicycles in the city of Toronto, and over 600,000 Ontarians, which represents an incredible opportunity for us to give people options about the way they travel every single day, but also to contribute in a very personal way to their own health, to a more connected community, and, of course, to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Cycling is not all about the carbon economy, but the carbohydrate economy. Lowering our consumption of both is an important contribution that cycling makes. I look forward to that continued conversation.

If I may, one last quick point, Speaker: As a former employee of Petro-Canada, I was proud to see the oil industry taking a lead in conversations out west after an announcement by the Alberta government, in fact, in



November. They are showing innovation, and our companies here are going to do exactly the same.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I am pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comment on the member's speech regarding Bill 172. I agree with my colleague from Huron–Bruce. Climate change is a very serious issue and it needs a very serious response from the government.

Specifically on their cap-and-trade plan, I don't know of anyone who has faith in this government to administer a \$1.9-billion fund that, for all purposes, will be used for their waste, their mismanagement and their scandals. This is a government that, in the speech today, talks about working with other parties, but in a by-election we just had in Whitby–Oshawa, specifically, they fraudulently tried to tell voters in that riding that the opposition parties would bring back coal plants, which is, again, a categorically false statement. On the one hand, they say that we should work together—if they really meant that, we should all celebrate the closing of the coal plants equally and we should all work towards measures that would reduce emissions.

In his lead speech today, the member opposite talked over and over, glowingly, about the British Columbia system, yet this government's plan is nowhere near like the British Columbia system. When he talks about the fact that citizens get credits back from the government through tax credits—this bill does not include any measures that are similar to British Columbia's. Here you've got a situation where the government is going to collect funds on the backs of drivers in my riding. I have no Leeds–Grenville transit system. Gas is going to go up, both natural gas and gasoline.

Again, what is this fund going to be used for? Is it for your pet projects or is it actually going to be for something that's going to benefit the province?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Beaches–East York for final comments.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to respond to the comments. I appreciate very much that people were listening. It's such an important first step, that people are hearing what we're saying on this side.

What I think I heard from the member from Huron–Bruce and, to some extent, the member from Leeds–Grenville is an acknowledgement that something has to be done and should be done. I think that's a fantastic change. When the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell brought a motion not too many months ago to discuss exactly this issue, only six members of the opposition party showed up to support the measure. I'm delighted to hear that there are voices within the party opposite that are looking to support this initiative.

Yes, maybe we want to go down a route of product performance standards as opposed to the assessment program we're using now; I don't know. I would love to get more positive feedback. We know that in BC, yes, that was the approach there. But BC, per dollar being

spent, isn't getting nearly as fast a carbon reduction as they are getting in California, as we will get in Ontario, as they're getting in Quebec. Cap-and-trade forces industry, whereas the BC program is far more premised on a voluntary compliance kind of model. Those were the consultations we went out on. That was the feedback we got: that in fact it's better to do cap-and-trade because you can guarantee your carbon reductions.

I also want to respond to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Bud Wildman was a great guy. I had the pleasure of being on Toronto Islands when Bud Wildman was the Minister of the Environment, test driving the very first Mazda Miata hydrogen-powered car. I actually set up the whole event, because I had an involvement. Bud was an incredible guy and a very good promoter of the environment, and I'm glad to hear him referenced.

Of course, my friend from Burlington—and the response back to the member from Algoma is that you don't want to ride your bikes to work, you can't do that, but maybe four-stroke motors on all the boats taking fishers out on the lake would be a great start rather than the two-strokes, which are much more polluting.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It's now close to 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Phil Holst, from the great riding of Oxford. Phil is here at Queen's Park today with his colleagues from Ducks Unlimited. Welcome, Phil, to this morning's session.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I'm very pleased to introduce my brother Frank Chiarelli and his wife, Marg, who are the proud grandparents of Ottawa page Julia Robertson.

I want to introduce Frances Robertson, proud grandmother of Julia Robertson, and also Maria Chiarelli and Glenn Robertson, mother and father of Julia Robertson.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, with respect to my brother Frank, he is the proud father of Peter Chiarelli, who was the GM of Stanley Cup winners the Boston Bruins, and now is general manager of the Edmonton Oilers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In the cause of fairness, I'll turn to the member from Nepean–Carleton.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker. Just to echo the Minister of Energy, who represents Ottawa West–Nepean, I'd like to welcome his family from Nepean–Carleton to this esteemed chamber.

I would like to let them know that I had lunch with Julia last week. She's an incredible young lady, and I see her doing well in life. Maybe, just maybe, I'll actually make a Conservative out of a Chiarelli sometime in the near future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The battle is on.



The member from Hamilton Mountain, are you introducing or resting? Okay, thank you.

The Minister of Immigration.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to introduce to the House a number of my wonderful locally engaged staff and some of the senior economic officers. Their dedicated work in our international trade offices around the world is invaluable. It is my pleasure to have them join us in the House later on today.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I'd like to welcome Ducks Unlimited to Queen's Park today. I had a good meeting this morning with Lynette Mader, their head of provincial operations; Owen Steele, the manager of conservation programs; and Angus Norman, their volunteer.

I remind all members that there is a reception this evening in the dining room with Ducks Unlimited from 4:30 to 7 o'clock. I hope to see everybody there this evening.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure today to introduce the family of page Delaney Mastronardi. Present in the public gallery this morning are her mother, Rima Mastronardi; her father, Domenic Mastronardi; her sister, and a former page of about four years ago, Dominique Mastronardi; and her aunt, Rolla Reid. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm absolutely delighted to welcome, in the public gallery, students from the Académie de la Moraine, located in my riding of Aurora. Welcome.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'd like to welcome three of my constituents from Barrie: Kevin Rich, Mike Williams and Kristen Wozniak are here today with Ducks Unlimited, one of our nation's foremost conservation organizations.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It is a great honour for me to introduce Zainab Abu Alrob, who is here in the gallery. She is an intern at Ryerson and will be working with us in our office for one of her classes.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I'm delighted to introduce the mother of today's page captain. Suzanne Uraiqat is today's page captain. She's from the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville. Her mother, Raja Rayyan, is in the public gallery. We welcome her.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Visiting us today in the Speaker's gallery is an award-winning producer, writer, comedian and performer, a friend and a member of the Order of Ontario: Mr. Rick Green. Please join me in welcoming Rick Green to the House.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** He's a fairly funny guy.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Premier. I would like to ask a question today from Global's Alan Carter, aka Queen's Park's very own anchorman. I ask

because he couldn't get a straight answer from this government last week during the budget scrum. He asked, "If you drive a car, heat your home with natural gas, you are going to pay more, correct? There will be less money for people at home, correct? There will be less money in their pocket at the end of the day."

Is this correct? Does this budget mean less money for families at the end of the day? We believe Alan deserved an answer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let's talk about—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Tell Alan. Just tell Alan.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I think Alan is perfectly capable of asking his own questions.

Let me just talk about what is in this budget that is supporting people. Quite frankly, there are enormous supports. I was at a high school this morning, at Jarvis Collegiate, and we talked about the reality that students who live in families who are low-income right through to middle-income are going to get more support for tuition. They're going to have more access to post-secondary, Mr. Speaker. That transformation of student assistance—free tuition for low-income families and more affordable tuition for middle-class families—is incredibly important across the province.

We are continuing to lower auto insurance rates. We are eliminating the \$30 Drive Clean emissions fee. We're lowering hospital parking fees for approximately 900,000 patients and visitors—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: If the tax increases weren't enough, this budget increases virtually every government service fee. Fees for driver and vehicle licensing are going up. Camping in provincial parks, fishing and hunting licences just got more expensive. Everything from liquor licences to event permits for charity fundraisers will cost people more. And the kicker is that it's not a one-time increase. Fees will go up every year under this Liberal government.

Is there not a single person, family, charity or business that you won't take more money from to pay for your years of waste and mismanagement?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I think the answer is no.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm not enamoured by some of the comments I'm hearing and so I'm going to start ratcheting up my role here, if it's necessary. Please keep those comments civil.

Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, it is quite something, and I know that the Leader of the Opposition might not be aware of this, but for many years his party was very adamant that we should look at the Drummond report, that we should look at what Don Drummond said to us about good government and responsible fiscal management. We continue to implement many of the recommendations that Don Drummond gave us. He might want to check with his colleagues about that.



Let me go through, again, the changes that we are making that are going to support families in this province. I talked about free tuition. The biggest investment in infrastructure in Ontario's history: We're in the third year of our \$160-billion investment. That creates 110,000 jobs a year. Surely, the Leader of the Opposition would agree that having a job is a pretty important part of having a high-quality life in the province.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: There is no one in the province that won't pay more because of your mistakes, because of Liberal mistakes. If you drive a car, you'll pay more. If you heat your home with gas, you'll pay more. If you fish or hunt, you'll pay more. If you are a senior with medication—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Natural Resources.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** —you'll pay more. If you're a charity hosting—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. Stop the clock.

The moment I say "Come to order," you continue. Don't go for two.

Please.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, fundamentally this budget makes life more expensive for everyone in Ontario. What has happened to this Premier's compassion? Why is she making life so much harder for everyone in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, let me just reinforce what I have said already, that there are many ways in this budget that we are supporting and lowering costs for families. Seniors between the ages of 65 and 70 will be able to get—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's 65 and 70.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Sixty-five and 70, that's what I said—will be able to get the shingles vaccine for free. We're dedicating \$100 million to help 37,000 homeowners conduct audits in order to reduce their energy bills. As I've said, we're eliminating the \$30 Drive Clean emissions fee. We're providing \$650,000 in matching funding with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to support an innovative program for high school students that will help them with financial literacy education.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General noted in 2009 that Ontario's service fees per capita are among the lowest in Canada. That's the reality. That's what we're dealing with as we continue to support families of the province.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is to the Premier. This government has no credibility in northern Ontario. The Liberals say that they value northern Ontario, but not once did the Minister of Finance mention the north, northern Ontario or the Ring of Fire during his actual

budget speech. This is the third straight budget that in the budget fine print, they have reannounced funding for the Ring of Fire; it's a reannouncement of a reannouncement. But despite three years of these announcements, there is not a shovel in the ground or a single dollar spent.

Will the Premier stop paying lip service to northern Ontario? Will she finally invest in the Ring of Fire? Will she finally stand up and invest in northern Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** You know, I believe that the students who live in northern Ontario will be able to access free tuition as easily as students who live in southern Ontario.

Let me talk, Mr. Speaker, about the \$550 million in northern infrastructure through the northern highways program: four-lane expansion of Highway 69 south of Sudbury and Highway 11/17 east of Thunder Bay; rehabilitation of the Noden Causeway near Fort Frances; resurfacing of 36 kilometres of Highway 144; and replacement of the Valentine River Bridge.

Let me talk about the \$300 million a year to support projects in rural and northern communities through the Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Don't encourage anyone else.

You have a 10-second wrap-up, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund for rural and northern communities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Premier: The only news that government is making in northern Ontario is their Sudbury by-election scandal.

This budget ignores the importance of the north. Let me quote Nathan Lawrence, the president of the North-western Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce, when he told the pre-budget hearings that "there is a significant component of our northern region that is inaccessible through transportation, through electricity and other means of infrastructure."

For a government that can't say a sentence without mentioning their commitment to infrastructure, the development of northern infrastructure seems to be missing from this budget. The Liberals already cut part of the north when the Nipigon bridge failed.

Is their lack of funding a plan to cut off northern Ontario? Will you support northern infrastructure, yes or no?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question is ridiculous. The fact is, the investments we're making in infrastructure are across the province. I just talked about \$550 million in northern infrastructure—

*Interjections.*



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You don't know when I'm going to call you to attention when I'm asking for quiet.

Please finish, Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think that the Leader of the Opposition could talk to the folks at the Atikokan General Hospital, where the renovation of the acute and long-term-care beds is taking place. He could talk to the folks at the Alexander Henry High School in Sault Ste. Marie, where \$8 million is going to retrofit that school.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He could talk to the nurses in Thunder Bay who are closing down their practice.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** He could talk to the folks at Confederation College in Thunder Bay where a new technology, education and collaboration hub is happening. He could talk to the people who are involved in the 6,956 projects that have been supported by \$1 billion through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

He could have a conversation with all of those folks and understand the investments that this government has made in northern infrastructure.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm standing.  
Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** The question the Premier called ridiculous was actually a quote from the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. It's nice that that's the way you treat northern Ontario. You can dismiss northern Ontario, you can dismiss their concerns, but the reality is, look at the pre-budget hearings. Your finance minister may not want to pay attention to the pre-budget hearings but you should pay attention.

New Liskeard, in the pre-budget hearings, reported that they had to close their operating room for 50% of the time because one in 10 of their staff got cut. Timmins was forced to cut 26 beds, close their physio and fire 40 staff. And in the Soo, they had to cut 50 beds in acute and complex care. That being said, there is nothing in this budget for northern Ontario except for reduced health care and a higher cost of living.

Why has this Premier continued to, again and again—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I was not in any way commenting on the remarks of people from the north, Mr. Speaker. I was—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Energy.

Please finish.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I was challenging the premise of the question from the Leader of the Opposition. This is a member who sat in the Harper government for nine years. We have had \$1 billion invested in the Ring of Fire. There was no support—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—anything to do with the north or the Ring of Fire. We have made investments in the northern economy and we will continue to do so.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. It sounds like the Premier realized her plan to make most seniors pay more for medication was a mistake. Will the Premier acknowledge that we should be expanding prescription drug coverage and protecting universal access to health care, not cutting back the coverage that seniors need?

1050

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite knows perfectly well—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington will come to order and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—that the changes that we made in terms of the Ontario drug benefit were intended to and will increase support for 170,000 seniors, who will now not have to pay any deductible for their prescription drugs. That's 170,000 seniors who will have more support and will have more access. That was the intention and that is what will happen as a result of the changes we're making.

I acknowledged yesterday that, as the regulation is out for consultation now in terms of the threshold for the seniors who will be asked to pay a bit more on their deductible—that consultation is out, and if we can come to an agreement that that threshold should be changed, we're open to doing that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** A senior in Ontario living on \$19,500 will see their drug costs nearly double under this Liberal budget. Yesterday, the Premier said, "If we didn't get it right, then we will make a change," like she just said earlier.

Will the Premier admit today that if she didn't get it right, she will commit today to changing it?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the Minister of Health wants to weigh in on this, but I just want to make it clear what's happening here. The third party came to a conclusion. I came to the same conclusion. The third party said, "This is what we think should happen." I said, "I've reached that conclusion. I agree with you. We should be open to making this change." Now they are saying, "Are you going to do this?"

I said yesterday that we were going to have the regulation out for consultation. We're open to making the



change. I would suggest they're having a hard time taking yes for an answer.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The issue is about this consultation. Listen: The Premier shouldn't need another series of consultations to figure out that doubling drug costs for seniors living on \$19,500 is not right.

Will the Premier commit today, admit that she was wrong and cancel her plan to double drug costs for most seniors in this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Quite frankly, I can't understand why the member opposite can't take yes for an answer—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Half a cup is no good; we want a full cup.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** He should be in his right seat, too. Get over there.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will get a second time if he continues to, first, speak while I get him to pay attention and, second, speak while I'm standing.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I can't understand why the member opposite is not interested in the fact that 170,000 more low-income seniors are going to pay no drug costs on an annual basis, and 30,000 more each and every year.

The member opposite hasn't acknowledged that our out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors in this province are by far the lowest in the entire country. In fact, our average out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors are \$277 a year. The next closest province is over \$600. There are provinces that are over \$1,000.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The question is to the Premier again. Yesterday, the Premier said that she needed more consultation to figure out if it was the wrong decision to nearly double the drug costs for seniors living on \$19,500. Well, it's clear. I can tell you the answer: That's the wrong decision. You don't need a consultation to tell you that. Anyone who doesn't get that is out of touch with the reality that most people and most seniors face.

Will the Premier commit today to cancel her plan to double the medication costs for most seniors living in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The member opposite knows we're not planning to double the costs to our seniors. The Premier has been crystal clear: As we put this forward for

consultation, as we draw in an additional 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors who will no longer have to pay any annual deductible, as we post the regulations for consultations, we will look at all seniors and how it impacts them.

The Premier is very open to having that conversation. I would hope that the member opposite would be part of that conversation as we determine what's best for our seniors, but I'm disappointed that he refuses to acknowledge that those 170,000 of the poorest of the poor seniors under our plan will no longer have to pay any annual deductible.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Ensuring that seniors can afford medication means keeping seniors healthy. It means less time in the hospital and more time for seniors to enjoy what they've earned. It also means fewer worries—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy House leader, second time.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** —about how they'll pay those bills.

Will the Premier, again, commit today that come this summer, seniors will be able to afford their medication costs?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Let me talk about some of the other things that we're doing for our seniors in this budget: for example, the additional \$250 million that we're investing in home and community care to benefit our seniors; the \$75 million over the next three years in community-based, residential hospice and palliative care—we've heard nothing about that from the member opposite or his party; the 170,000 more seniors who will pay no annual deductible; and the shingles vaccine provided free of charge, a \$170 value to each and every senior between the ages of 65 and 70.

We're removing the debt retirement charge, which will save seniors on average \$70 a year. There's a new \$10 million in behavioural supports for seniors in long-term-care homes who are suffering from dementia. That's 10 million more dollars to support those individuals.

The list is long. I'm happy to talk further in the final supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Doubling the cost of medication for most seniors in this province is a huge mistake. I hope the Premier understands that. She shouldn't need yet another consultation to tell her what everybody already knows, that doubling the drug cost for seniors, without consultation, without warning, without even asking them, was a mistake.

Will the Premier ensure that Ontarians won't have to pay for her mistake?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The member knows that our drug program hasn't been updated in 20 years. We decided that we would actually bring 170,000 more of the lowest-income seniors into the category which allows them to pay no annual deductible at all—to go from \$100 deduct-



ible annually down to zero dollars. I would hope, at least, that the old NDP would have supported that kind of measure. The new NDP has chosen not to reference that whatsoever. It's not a doubling that we propose; it's increasing that deductible from \$100 to \$170.

The Premier has been absolutely crystal clear. She's willing to work with the opposition parties. You've come up with no suggestions. I know you want to spend more and more and more money. We have an incredible drug program in this province. We need to make sure that we get it right for all seniors. That's the commitment that our Premier and this government make. We'll do that as we go forward with consultations.

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Premier. We're now seeing the effects of your government bringing forth a budget without proper consultation. Seniors were shocked to hear that, on top of higher hydro rates and driver's licence fees, the prescription drug costs will double. Three quarters of Ontario seniors will be affected by this drug cost increase. However, seniors were not consulted. In fact, even the Ontario Pharmacists Association was taken aback by this decision.

Consultation should take place before the budget is released. This totally exemplifies your government's total mismanagement of our province. Premier, could you not have taken the time to sit down and consult with seniors prior to this budget release?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I have to repeat that 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors in this province are going to be joining approximately 300,000 who already pay no annual deductible because they can't afford to. We're going to have almost half a million seniors in this province who will pay that co-payment of \$2 or less because many pharmacists will waive that cost, and they will pay no annual deductible. It will go from \$100 down to zero dollars.

I would hope that even a party such as the Conservative Party would support that measure, Mr. Speaker. I would hope that the NDP would support that measure, where we're providing significant support to those who need it most. As we go forward, we've committed to looking to see how it impacts all seniors, and we're open to good suggestions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Premier: You should have looked at what the impact is going to be on all seniors prior to going forward with this budget.

Your government and Minister of Finance were quick to release this budget, so quick that you forgot to include Ontarians in consultations. Our seniors, who are the most vulnerable of our society, should have a say in what's happening in our province. I would have thought your government would have learned to consult after they

embarrassed themselves over the smoking of medical marijuana just a few months ago.

**1100**

Yesterday, you said that you'd like to get it right for seniors. Why didn't you properly consult with seniors before the budget release?

You're making life unaffordable for seniors. Seniors now will pay more for energy, seniors cannot access long-term-care beds, seniors will pay double for their prescription costs, and seniors still cannot get their knee or hip replaced in January, February or March of each and every year. Premier, why are you failing seniors?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It begs repeating the measures that we've announced in this year's budget that will benefit our seniors. I didn't get an opportunity when I was providing that list to the NDP to reference as well the additional investments we're making in long-term care—a 2% increase over the next three years.

We made a decision, of course, and it was referenced in the budget, the measures that we're taking on hospital parking, which will benefit our seniors across this province, to increase and improve accessibility when they go either as patients or to visit their loved ones. We're increasing our social assistance rates. We're providing the shingles vaccine free of charge. We're expanding, as I've mentioned—I don't know how many times I have to mention it before I get a positive response; 170,000 more seniors are going to benefit.

We're already in an environment where Ontario, by far, by a long shot, is more generous than any other province or jurisdiction in Canada.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Patients and their families were hopeful with this year's budget, and so was I. But seven straight years of squeezing hospitals with base funding below inflation will not undo the damage the Liberals have done to health care in Ontario.

Page 116 of the budget says, "In 2016-17 the government is increasing its base funding for hospitals by 1%." That's less than inflation; 1% is the status quo. It means that the 1,200 nurses who have lost their jobs won't get their jobs back. It means that the long wait-lists will continue. It means that hospitals will be forced to continue to cut programs, services and jobs.

Why did this Liberal government choose to make life harder for patients in Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** A 1% increase to the hospital line works out to about \$150 million. The member knows that in this budget we're increasing the hospital line by \$345 million. That's more than 2%. That's more than the CPI or the rate of inflation. It's a substantial increase.

I wish I had the quote in front of me from Anthony Dale from the Ontario Hospital Association, but when I was with him yesterday morning at University Health Network with a whole host of patients, their advocates, health care workers and health care professionals from



that part of Toronto, they applauded the substantial investment of \$345 million and the difference that it would make to patient care and to our hospitals. It was applauded enthusiastically by the head of the Ontario Hospital Association.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** At St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, they say that the Liberals' budget is not going to change anything; they still have to cut \$26 million and they still have to lay off 136 workers. Family and front-line workers know better than what you're trying to say to us.

Patients are suffering with the government cuts. Nurses are being laid off in Windsor, Hamilton, Waterloo and right across the province. Beds have been closed in North Bay and Timmins. Hospitals in Thunder Bay and across the province are so full that they are forced to open beds in hallways and patient lounges, and none of this gets paid for.

When will the Minister of Health realize that Liberal cuts to health care are hurting patients?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It boggles the mind to understand how a billion-dollar increase in the health care budget this year going forward can be characterized by the third party as somehow being a decrease—a billion dollars more in new funding, \$345 million of that going specifically to the hospital line of the budget.

But we're doing much more: \$12 billion over the next 10 years to build and improve existing hospitals—to build new hospitals and renovate existing ones. In fact, that fund that we have annually that helps hospitals with maintenance and renovations, we're increasing that by an additional \$50 million.

We're investing \$85 million in our nurses through our nurse practitioners, in our community health centres, in our family health teams—hopefully they would support that—and \$75 million as well to fund 20 more hospices, to increase funding to hospices. There are so many positive investments for our health care system. I don't understand how that can possibly add up to anything but good news.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Our health care budget is increasing every year, and in the 2016 budget you see this confirmed. We see an increase of \$1 billion this year, to a total of \$51.8 billion. In my riding of Kitchener Centre and in greater Waterloo region, I recently met with hospital CEOs, LHIN representatives and doctors, who are very pleased to see increases in our local funding.

As our population ages, we need to ensure that our system is ready to care for our seniors. With health equity as a top priority in the minister's Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care, it is very important to address health care for our most vulnerable. Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please tell this House what

the government is doing to support Ontarians through health care investments?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, at risk of repeating myself, let me start with a couple of quotes from individuals who I think, as it pertains to our hospitals, have a tremendous amount of credibility. Anthony Dale, who is the president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association, his quote about our budget: "This investment will go to support front-line care and help to keep wait times low, maintain access to elective surgery and ensure that important health service programs are maintained." Or, if that's not enough, the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario, so all the hospitals across the province, the teaching hospitals that do such great teaching and research: "The Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario ... welcomes the commitments in the 2016 Ontario budget for an investment in Ontario's hospitals, and its overall focus on fostering innovation and building prosperity." We know it's much more than just our hospitals; it's also that transformation that we're undertaking.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'd like to thank the minister for his response. I know, in particular, that at St. Mary's hospital in my riding of Kitchener Centre the staff and the management there were very happy to learn about the investment. But we know that health care extends beyond hospitals, and that's why our government is continuing to increase funding for home and community care by \$250 million this year.

A few years ago when my mother had surgery for breast cancer, she was very anxious to leave the hospital to go home, where she wanted to recover, and she was able to do so with excellent CCAC care that followed. I sat on the pre-budget consultations, we toured the province, and there were repeated calls for expansion to hospice care. Now we're doubling our investment in community-based hospice and palliative care to \$155 million over three years. Can the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to make life easier for those who need end-of-life care?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm very proud of the investment that we're making in palliative care and end-of-life care. It's an investment we're augmenting; we're putting in an additional \$75 million, for a total of \$155 million over the next three years. It's in response to what is such an appropriate measure to take, an appropriate support to provide individuals and their loved ones at that very difficult and challenging part of anyone's life. It has resulted, I think, in a response even from members of this Legislature, although of course if they're in the opposition they would refrain from saying it here. Let me quote the member from—Vic Fedeli. I'm sorry, the member from—

**Interjection:** Nipissing.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Nipissing. I apologize for saying his name. From the member from Nipissing: "I was really pleased to see the hospice money come through. We have a hospice in North Bay and it's such a huge need.... When I saw that, I thought that was excellent.



And the autism money. I sat in my office when I met with constituents and they're just at the end of the road. And so those two initiatives I thought were well announced."

These are the types of things—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Premier. Last week's budget was her government's ninth straight deficit. They have more than doubled the debt. We have a larger debt than all other provinces combined. We have the largest subnational debt in the entire world, forcing their government—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. If you don't respond, it makes it easier for me to get there. Thank you.

Finish, please.

1110

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** They've made servicing the debt and the deficit the third-largest spending priority of their government. That puts our future generations at risk. I said that last week. It takes money intended for health care and education and gives it toward paying off the debt.

You don't have to take my word for it. Even the Toronto Star said this past week that the Liberal plan "leaves Ontario's poorest children behind." Not only is this budget a fiscal train wreck; it makes life more difficult for everyday families.

For active middle-class families, it's just as bad. They are taking money, namely for the children's activity tax credit, which helps moms and dads give their kids a hand up. I would like to know why this government is trying to take that away and making a bigger burden for mothers and fathers.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, as usual, it's difficult, because there's no consistency coming from the opposition. I'm not quite sure whether they think we should be spending more or whether we should be spending less.

We've got a credible plan to eliminate the deficit, but at the same time, we know that investing in people is important. That's why the free tuition and the changes to student assistance are so very important for families across the province, particularly low-income and middle-income families.

We've been very clear in terms of changes on the tax credits. We were going to look at every line in our spending. We were going to make decisions based on the evidence. So if you look at the children's activity tax credit, it was not serving its intended purpose. Its intended purpose was to assist lower-income families with enrolment costs. That's not what it was doing, so we changed that.

We're going to continue to make those kinds of decisions that reinvest and deliver the outcomes that we know people need.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** If the Premier wants to talk about consistency, she has to look at the last nine budgets her government tabled and see a massive deficit and an even bigger debt that has made Ontario a basket case financially.

The children's activity tax credit is useful to a lot of mothers and fathers I represent in Riverside South and in Barrhaven. They apply it to their children's piano lessons and hockey fees, and even to help them tutor as their children progress, sometimes making an otherwise unaffordable activity accessible to that family.

Even Dalton McGuinty, when he brought in the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, the HST, brought in the tax credit and said, "This is one more way that we can help parents pay for those costs associated with raising healthy, active ... kids." And now you're going to cut it when you bring in the single largest gas tax increase in Ontario's history. What have you got against the next generation?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I want the next generation to be at its very best. That's why we are making dramatic changes to student assistance in this province.

You know, the member opposite doesn't get to say "spend more" and "spend less" at the same time. You just don't get to have it both ways—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We promised the people of Ontario that we were going to go through all of the expenditures in government, and we were going to look at what was working and what wasn't.

If you look, for example, at the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, what has happened is that that credit has had significantly lower take-up than we had anticipated and doesn't provide support to low-income seniors. That's what it was intended to do. That's not what it does, so we're not going to continue with that.

For the research and development tax credit, we're actually reinvesting the savings from those tax changes into new targeted investments.

So we've made decisions based on evidence—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Scandals, waste and mismanagement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Leeds—Grenville, second time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —so that we can get the outcomes that we know are needed, whether it's for seniors or low-income families who need support for tuition—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Last week's budget clearly indicates that the government isn't spending \$430 million already allocated



for education. The minister claims that this is not a cut to education.

Well, Speaker, Ontario families know that less money spent on education amounts to a cut, and cuts always drastically impact our most vulnerable students. The result: Schools in Belleville, Milton and London that provide specialized supports to some of our most vulnerable students with exceptional learning and developmental needs may be forced to close.

Speaker, on this side of the House we believe all children deserve equal access to education. Why is this Minister of Education making life harder for our most vulnerable students?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** There are a couple of different issues getting mixed about here. Let's talk a little bit about provincial schools for a minute, and then we'll go back to the whole issue of cuts.

Number one, there's no change in funding, in this budget, that we've made to provincial schools. But what we have discovered when we look at the data is that some of the provincial schools have very low enrolment. Some, like the provincial school for the blind in your hometown of Brantford, have a lot of students. The schools for the deaf in Milton and Belleville have quite healthy enrolment. But we have other provincial schools where there are only 11 children left in attendance. We have another provincial school where there are only 19, and the projections for next year are even lower. At that point, we have a responsibility to look at the programs and figure out how we can best deliver programs for the sake of the children. It has nothing to do with money.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Again to the minister: The minister should know that decreased enrolment does not mean decreased needs. Ontario families are tired of hearing this government scapegoating their underfunding of education, while our most vulnerable students pay the price. This government is taking real dollars out of education and real kids are being impacted.

The potential closure of provincial demonstration schools for students with severe learning disabilities, as well as schools for the deaf, means our most vulnerable kids will be left with few options to gain equal access to an education. We've received emails and phone calls from children with unique needs. They are begging this government to not close institutions designed to help them succeed.

Will the minister finally admit that pulling \$430 million from education is not in the best interests of students?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** In fact, Speaker, we haven't pulled \$430 million out of education funding. If you look at our funding, we have increased funding by \$8.1 billion, and that continues to be true.

If you look at the budget documents, you will find that the increase in the budget in my ministry has been 1.2%, on average, each and every year. That's what the budget document says. That will continue to be the case. We are increasing the funding for education.

For example, she's trying to tell us that we cut the money last year for schools. Do you know what we did in this year in which we cut money, according to her? We spent \$498 million for 30 new schools and for 26 additions and renovations—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our government's 2016 budget committed to update the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the details of which will be shared in coming weeks. There is a commitment for new funding to support our goal to end homelessness in 10 years. There is also significant investment in supportive housing, to help Ontarians with mental health, medical and accessibility needs to live independently and with dignity.

It is my understanding that the minister will develop a new, portable housing benefit which will transform the social housing system. Will the minister explain what this new benefit is and how it will improve the social housing system for my constituents?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the honourable member for the question.

I'm tremendously excited about the infusion of \$178 million in new funding in the budget to support housing subsidies and supports.

1120

Regarding the portable housing benefit, the member is right: Once developed, this benefit could have a huge impact in improving the efficiency of social housing in Ontario. At present, Ontarians in need of housing assistance rely on various programs across the province, but this assistance is usually tied to a particular unit. Through a portable housing benefit, support funds would be tied to an eligible household and not to a specific housing unit. This means that when a person moves, the benefits would move with them. This will mean more consistent support and more choice for people in need, as well as more flexibility for those who deliver social and affordable housing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I know constituents in Mississauga—Brampton South who rely on housing assistance, as well as our municipal partners, will appreciate this modern, cost-effective way to address the province's affordable housing challenge.

I have read in the budget that our government has also committed to run a pilot project that will provide this portable housing benefit to those who flee domestic violence. It is a priority for our government that women in Ontario feel safe in their homes and throughout their communities. Through you, Mr. Speaker, will the minister share with this House how this model of housing assistance will help survivors of domestic violence?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Violence against women is a serious problem that cannot and will not be tolerated in Ontario. That's why our government is taking this action, building on existing efforts to combat gender-based violence as coordinated by the minister responsible for women's issues. Our government will invest \$2.4 million this year in a pilot version of this new portable housing benefit that will focus on those fleeing domestic violence.

We know that these survivors have an acute need for emergency housing. In providing this benefit to survivors, we're empowering them to make safe living choices with peace of mind that their housing assistance will travel with them wherever they need to go. This is a good step forward, one we're proud of and one we're going to pilot. We're going to evaluate it and see if it has implications for a broader system across Ontario.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: I see agriculture is mentioned in the budget papers. It's on page 346, the last page, explaining that after all these years, value-added agriculture is still being assessed at the high-tax, industrial rate.

Where is the assistance for rural natural gas expansion, other than expanding the tax on it? How are far-flung residents of rural and northern Ontario going to deal with the new taxes and fees on home heating and gasoline?

Further to action on climate change, six ministries now have a line item listed as Green Investment Fund initiatives, but not OMAFRA. Farmers also want to help out on climate change. Why has the minister excluded farming from the Green Investment Fund?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk this morning for asking a question about agriculture. I mean, we're very pleased that the finance minister mentioned agriculture several times throughout his budget speech that he delivered last Thursday.

We do know that farmers across the province of Ontario, 52,000 family farms, over 30,000 of them are involved in voluntary environmental farm plans. They will be a significant player as this government reaches its targets for GHGs. We know that Don McCabe, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture—we look forward to taking those investments that will be generated through our auction of credits to put back into agriculture, which is leading the way and is a real leader in Ontario's economy today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Well, here's something else we do know: The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has cut his budget by close to \$28 million. That's a \$28-million cut to one of the smallest ministries.

How will this budget cut help farms and agribusinesses that are not getting their requested farm industrial rate for electricity? How will this budget cut help employers and employees who did not request the added costs, fees and taxes on agribusiness? Speaker, the agriculture minister

cut his budget from \$943 million to \$916 million, close to a \$28-million cut on this minister's watch. Why is this?

We know he's not renewing the \$10-million Local Food Fund.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** What other agri-food programs will this minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sir, could I—I'm standing. The deputy House leader is warned.

You have one wrap-up for your question.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker.

We know you're not renewing the \$10-million Local Food Fund. What other ag and food programs will this minister now be eliminating?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the supplementary. Just to provide some education to my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk, the great food fund has been moved over to the greenbelt foundation, and the greenbelt foundation, of course, will be used to fund those projects that are just so important to distribute local food in the province of Ontario—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Huron-Bruce, come to order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** With regards, I think the member should take the time to read the budget. The Green Investment Fund is just one tool to help businesses transition to lower GHG emissions right across the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the proof is in the number.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, second time.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I had the opportunity back in 2006 to look at the Tory ag budgets. From 1995 to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm standing. Stop the clock. I remind the minister, when I stand, you sit.

The second thing is—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm not finished yet; I still have some other people I have to get. The member from Huron-Bruce, second time. If it continues, these shots back and forth, I'll go.

New question.

#### WATER QUALITY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la première ministre. Members of the NDP have repeatedly raised in this chamber the ongoing and appalling mercury exposure experienced by the Grassy Narrows First Nation people. In 2012 the Premier said she would rebuild the relationship to the community, yet in 2014 elder Steve Fobister, the former chief of Grassy Narrows First Nation, went on a hunger strike right here on the front lawn. Then, again, this government said they would act, but right now, as we speak, the community feels that they have to appeal to the United Nations for help.



Speaker, my question is simple: When will the people of Grassy Narrows have safe drinking water?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you for that question. We take the issues at Grassy Narrows, the mercury pollution, very seriously. I met with Chief Fobister last summer and had a very detailed conversation with him about this issue. I have been to Grassy Narrows to speak with the chief and his community and tour the area.

As a result of that, we've set up a number of working groups. We are working with the federal and the First Nation partners to make real progress in dealing with this. In particular, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs represents the province on the Ontario-Grassy Narrows nation working group. It's a cross-ministry team. It consists of members of the Ministry of Health and members of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

We've also engaged with the new federal government, which is very anxious to work with the province and Grassy Narrows to resolve this issue in a way that the federal government has never participated before.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It has been half a century. The health effects of mercury poisoning are well known. They are horrific and they are affecting so many people in Grassy Narrows. The residents of Grassy Narrows are Ontarians like you and I, Speaker. They deserve safe drinking water. They should not have to go to Geneva, Switzerland, and talk to the United Nations to gain respect for this basic human right.

They live in Ontario. We are not a Third World country. When will this government clean up the English-Wabigoon River, when will they provide assistance to the people who live with the effects of mercury poisoning, and when will they provide the good people of Grassy Narrows with safe drinking water?

1130

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Thank you for that question.

One of the ways in which we're dealing with this problem is to review how the Mercury Disability Board works and how it conducts its analysis of the problem, how it determines what assistance it's going to provide and so on. I committed to Chief Fobister last summer that I would visit, and I did that, and as a result of that visit, we have set up a process to review how the Mercury Disability Board goes about its work.

We are engaging the best experts that we can. We are working with the Grassy Narrows First Nation. We are working with the relevant ministries in Ontario and, now, with the federal government. The vehicle of the Mercury Disability Board is one of the key pieces with which we can deal with this problem, by looking at the effects of the poisoning and solutions.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Minister, one of the issues that comes up the most at the doors in my community is the issue of our economy and jobs. As you know, I have a business background, and so we've spent a lot of time talking with you and your staff about this issue and how we can grow our economy.

Last week, we highlighted that we're on the heels of seven years of economic growth in this province. We've seen over 600,000 jobs created since the depths of the recession, and with a lot of anticipated growth coming forward in our economy.

In last week's budget, we introduced measures to preserve and grow the economy. We're doing things like making record investments in infrastructure, reducing the regulatory burdens on businesses, and we're maintaining a low corporate tax environment that will continue to attract investment. These things benefit business, they benefit job creation, they benefit our economy and they benefit the prosperity that the people of my community enjoy.

Minister, many of my constituents are excited about this, but they're also concerned about the volatility in the future. Could you please tell the House what we are doing to prepare Ontario's economy, not only for today, but for the years ahead?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I appreciate the question. I also appreciate this member's advice on these issues.

We're in a global race to be more innovative, and we need to step it up. Our world is changing rapidly and we need to tap into the best global talent to ensure we succeed in an increasingly competitive global environment. This talent is already available here in Ontario.

Our government, in this budget, is focusing on the fast-paced innovation economy, with significant new investments in everything from quantum computing to advanced manufacturing to clean tech, biotech and automotive innovation. We're doubling down with a new Business Growth Initiative, committing \$400 million over five years to build on our investments and that talent, to scale up our smaller businesses, to drive innovation and to make Ontario the easiest place in the world to do business.

Some of this is economic; some of this involves our infrastructure initiatives. A lot of it is with the leadership of our great Minister of Research—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you, Minister. Investing in our economy and ensuring businesses have the tools they need to grow and to create jobs is critical to the future of our province, so I'm glad to hear the minister's answer.

But we can't just focus on reducing burdens in one particular sector over another. I think of one of the conversations I had with the constituents in my riding of Etobicoke Centre. What people are understanding is that to be competitive in a new economy, we have to invest in supporting highly skilled job creation. We have to support R&D, innovation and helping businesses not only start up but actually scale up—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** How about prompt payment? What are you doing there?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, second time.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** —and bring their products to the global market. We don't want to see Ontario's talent leave and travel to the Silicon Valley or Europe or Asia to start a business. We want them to do it right here in Ontario.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you give me some concrete examples of initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and growing to prepare Ontario to succeed on a global scale?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's very obvious by the member's comments that he really gets it, and it's great to see. What the member points out is absolutely crucial to our province, and that's why our Business Growth Initiative includes a number of new initiatives. I'll share a couple of them with you: a new voucher system to help smaller high-growth firms access services like market research, testing, export development and research opportunities; a commitment to open up government procurement to provide a platform for made-in-Ontario innovation and technology, something our smaller firms have been looking for for some time; a centre for regulatory excellence, which will help cut unnecessary red tape in the most powerful, unprecedented way to date; and a strategic investment office that will attract investment to Ontario and help fund commercialization opportunities. These are just a few of the many initiatives that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question.

#### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Premier. Where I come from, talk is cheap, and promises are only as good as the politicians who make them. In the two years since the Premier made a pre-election visit to Kitchener to promise all-day, two-way GO service within five years, a promise the transportation minister admitted was aspirational in nature, we've had nothing but talk.

The 2016 budget provides the latest example, full of shout-outs to Kitchener–Waterloo transit enhancements without once indicating timelines for project completions; just more talk. Speaker, a budget is where governments list their detailed spending plans and timelines, and yet all we get is talk.

Would the Premier tell us why the people of Kitchener should believe her promise on all-day, two-way GO when it did not even make its way into the budget?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to thank the member opposite for his question. I want to begin by saying that of course budget 2016, in many respects, is fundamentally about how important it is for us to build this province up by investing billions of dollars in transit and transportation infrastructure, both in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and beyond in communities like Kitchener–Waterloo.

I should also mention that it's because of MPPs like the member from Kitchener Centre and the member from Cambridge and this Premier and this finance minister that this government is going to get it right—and we are getting it right. That member knows that in April of last year, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that we would invest \$13.5 billion over the next decade to transform the GO rail network on all seven of our corridors, and that member, again, consistently has voted against budget after budget after budget that would help his own community.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Well, Speaker, the talk continues. After waiting—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You can risk.  
Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** After waiting two years for promised essential GO improvements and getting little more than talk, Kitchener residents are still left waiting for the train. We've grown weary watching government transit expansions go forward elsewhere while we're stuck at the back of the bus.

Speaker, we were hoping the budget would provide new direction, but instead, we saw new ways to tax us, with no timelines on our local transit needs. Yet one day later, the Kitchener Centre MPP tried to make amends, telling CTV that there will be “a very substantial announcement” on all-day, two-way GO before the summer. Will the Premier please tell us what was so substantial about this supposed announcement that it didn't make its way into the budget?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I relish questions like this, because of course this Premier and this government and the member from Kitchener Centre and everybody on this side of the chamber understands why it's important for us to invest the money, to invest the billions of dollars to make sure that we build the province up, that we expand GO Transit, that we build highways and roads and bridges and so much more.

I think it might be helpful, maybe even a little bit instructive, for that member who has asked us this question to stroll on down to the front bench and ask his leader, Patrick Brown, why in almost 10 years—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.  
Order.

#### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Kitchener–Conestoga on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 99(d), written questions are to be answered within 24 sessional days. I have yet to receive answers on two overdue questions submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as well as to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would refer to the deputy House leader to remind you that you are required under standing order 99(d) to file a response within 24 sessional days.

Your response to one of the questions is now overdue, and I would ask that you give the House some indication of when your response would be forthcoming. That would be the answer to question 485.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order: We would be pleased to take this under advisement and act at the earliest possible opportunity.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: If I might be able to correct my record this morning in a response to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, I had asked that legislative research do a review for me in 2006 on the agricultural budgets from the Progressive Conservative governments—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. The date is all that's needed. When you correct your record, you don't make any other statements other than to correct your record.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm very pleased to welcome to the House, in her second official day with Team Thompson, Alison Brown of the Ontario Legislative Internship Programme. I look forward to reading her statement in a few moments.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kitchener–Conestoga has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Transportation concerning two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### RIDEAU CARLETON RACEWAY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I have long been an advocate for the 1,000 rural eastern Ontario jobs at the Rideau Carleton Raceway and slots. As a major rural Ottawa and eastern Ontario employer, the Rideau Carleton has been under attack by the OLG, effectively since 2012: first,

when the Liberal government went to war on the horse racing industry by cancelling the Slots at Racetracks Program, and now with the OLG unfairly forcing local slot workers out of their jobs.

For the past two and a half months, slot workers at the Rideau Carleton Raceway have been locked out. They make less than at most smaller casinos across the province, and during that time they have been out in the cold, quite literally. It is massively cold in the city of Ottawa. It's minus 42 degrees Celsius on some days, and a blizzard when it's not that cold.

They have seen at the OLG that their revenues during that same period of time have decreased by \$1 million compared to this time last year. That tells me, along with the 2016 Ontario budget, that the OLG and the Liberals are intent on threatening the Rideau Carleton's existence so that they can continue with their ill-conceived modernization plan for gambling and possibly build a downtown Ottawa casino, which is at significant odds with those of us who actually represent the community.

I'm here to remind the OLG and the Liberals that I'm watching and it's time for them to start taking my constituents seriously.

##### DIMITRA DASKALOS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It has been five long years since the untimely death of my constituent Dimitra Daskalos at Toronto General Hospital on February 21, 2011. The questions to Ministers of Health, inside and outside of this House, remain unanswered. This is the seventh time since 2012 that I've risen in place to recognize the plight of the Daskalos family and their efforts to find answers after the death of Dimitra Daskalos.

This 92-year-old patient was treated as a bed blocker and presented with a bill from a hospital for over \$18,000—a bill that any hospital has no legal ability to collect—an \$18,000 bill which a legal expert on seniors' issues, Judith Wahl, has said is a charge that shows that someone is trying to act in a threatening way.

Dimitra was placed under unreasonable stress after receiving her bill and died in a weakened state shortly after an infected patient was moved into her room. One of Dimitra's daughters, Maria, with the support of her family, has for five long years asked for answers. They've petitioned this Legislature with over 10,000 names over the five years, and still they wait today.

Dimitra Daskalos deserved better. Her family deserved better. Maria Daskalos has been told that her mother's cause would be one of the first to be considered by the new Patient Ombudsman. The family waits to see if this will prove to be the case.

##### NEWMARKET RIVERWALK COMMONS

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I rise in the House today to highlight a great urban asset in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora: Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons. The project transformed an eight-acre downtown parking lot adjacent

to the Holland River into a recreational hub for the town of Newmarket and York region.

The design sought to make local and regional connections by integrating Newmarket's historic downtown with links to the Holland River and Fairy Lake. Riverwalk Commons hums with activity now. The centre is particularly active on Saturdays, when Newmarket's farmers' market is set up. Local farmers show up to sell produce, and the kids are there because of so many activities.

Just beyond the market, you're likely to find locals enjoying a walk along the Tom Taylor Trail. Indeed, Riverwalk Commons has something to offer all ages, whether it's a space for skating on an artificial pad in the winter, cooling off in the water pad on a hot summer's day or simply a place where neighbours can meet at the farmers' market.

The success of Riverwalk Commons has, as planned, spread to Newmarket's downtown core. Main Street Newmarket is becoming a gastronomic centre of York region, offering a variety of culinary experiences.

Riverwalk Commons is everything that good urban planning should be. The famous Canadian planner Jane Jacobs said, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." Riverwalk Commons embodies this vision. It builds civic pride.

#### BILL GUTHRIE

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I would like to acknowledge with sadness the passing on February 21 of my good friend and mentor Bill Guthrie.

Bill was born on August 18, 1923, on the family homestead in Whitby. He and his wife, Jackie, were married for 62 years, and they raised their family on the homestead. Bill and Jackie were long-standing members of Audley United Church until its closure in 2004.

Bill was a past president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and a lifelong member of the Composite Masonic Lodge, where I was a master. Bill was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

He loved his farm, his family and many travels with Jackie until, unfortunately, dementia slowly stole him from us recently. He was an incredibly loyal friend and a great citizen of my riding of Whitby-Oshawa. He'll be sadly missed. I want to acknowledge the importance of his passing today and his passing to my family as well.

#### WHIPPET GOOD

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to dedicate my statements today to a horse called Whippet Good—no, not the 1980 number one hit by Devo but, rather, a horse who has done more than just earn his keep at DeChellis Stables in my riding of Welland. The stables are run by constituents of mine: Jim DeChellis; his son, Nino; and long-time friend and activist Michelle Sinclair, who helps to maintain them.

Jim expanded his sideline of owning and training business when Atlas Steels closed in 2003. He took up harness racing when he had trouble finding work early on in his career. He has been a native of Welland for 66 years, and after almost 20 years at Atlas Steels, he and his son, Nino, purchased the horse for just under \$5,000.

Why is Whippet so special? He's fast approaching his 50th career win as well as almost \$1 million in lifetime earnings in 340 starts and 131 top-three finishes. In English, Whippet would have been the equivalent of a 45-year-old baseball player with 500 career home runs or a 45-year-old hockey player netting 500 goals.

After 11 years, Whippet, now 14, is being retired but has become not only a part of the DeChellis extended family but—earning recognition everywhere—a part of my Welland riding. Congratulations to Jim, Nino and Whippet Good.

#### PAUL PALLESCHI

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I take this opportunity to pay tribute to former Regional Councillor Paul Anthony Palleschi, or "Papa Palleschi," as people in the community called him.

Brampton has lost a friend and a leader with the passing of Paul Palleschi. He was a leader on council, and when he spoke, others listened. He will always be remembered by his large extended Irish, Italian and Canadian family and friends.

He was elected to Brampton council in 1985 and served on a number of boards and committees, including president of Peel Living and as a paramedic services board member.

His sense of humour was always pleasant and regularly appreciated by his fellow council members, community members and fellow elected officials.

In his public life, Paul Palleschi was a champion for the residents of wards 2 and 6, including his long-standing challenge against an OMB ruling that permitted a large condo development in a community of single-family homes within his riding.

#### 1510

In his personal life, he was a fixture at family sporting events, often coaching from the stands. He enjoyed going to Brampton Battalion and Brampton Beast hockey games. He passionately rode his Harley trike in support of Bike Nights and Toys for Tots rides. Paul loved to fish and proudly encouraged his grandchildren to also participate.

Paul worked closely with his colleagues to create a strong foundation for a thriving and sustainable city and region. After he had retired, he continued to be an advocate for the Peel Housing Corp. and Peel Living, where he was very proud of the public housing at present but always wanted to do more for his community.

On behalf of the Legislature, I extend my condolences to his wife, Patricia, his daughter, Michelle, and his son, Councillor Michael Palleschi.



## HEATHER EAST

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today, I would like to congratulate Heather East, a young writer from South Huron. She attends the South Huron District High School and she'll be honoured next Monday at Speaker Levac's book awards ceremony. The Speaker's award for young writers celebrates the talents of young Ontarians who have demonstrated excellence in writing.

Last fall, students in grades 7 to 12 from across the province submitted short stories and personal essays on a topic of choice. The selection committee marked entries according to style, originality and general presentation, as well as spelling and grammar. This is the first year that Speaker Levac has launched this award, and I'm proud that a writer from my community is being recognized in its pioneering year.

Heather's submission, a short fictional story titled "Mistakes," clearly stood out amongst the overwhelming number of entries submitted by students from across Ontario. I'm equally thrilled to be celebrating her in terms of the group of artists from the riding of Huron-Bruce. Heather is joining a gifted group of writers, actors, poets, singers, craftsmen and painters from the riding.

And speaking of painters, if you haven't taken the opportunity, I'd also like to encourage you to keep an eye out for the paintings by George Agnew Reid, an artist from Huron-Bruce whose works are prominently featured throughout Queen's Park.

I look forward to welcoming Heather next Monday when she visits Queen's Park and I wish her the very best during the final competition. Have a good day, and we'll see you next Monday, Heather.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I guess I can't throw the member out this afternoon.

Further members' statements.

## GEORGIAN COLLEGE

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Speaker, I can't tell you how exciting it was in Barrie and all of Simcoe county when, the day after our government's amazing announcement about tuition for students, the great partnership between Georgian College and Lakehead University made another announcement to make post-secondary education more accessible for students. Georgian leads the way in terms of partnerships with the universities, and Friday's announcement solidifies this fact.

I was thrilled to be present as Georgian announced 20 new degree programs and transfer pathways in partnership with Lakehead University. The degrees being offered over the next five years include business administration, health management, gerontology and hopefully engineering, all programs that will be in demand by the employers of the future. These programs, Mr. Speaker, like all others at Georgian College, are career-focused and will prepare students to contribute much to our great province as we move forward.

I echo Georgian College president MaryLynn West-Moynes when she says, "Georgian College students will graduate job-ready, and our communities will have the workforce they need to grow our economy."

Looking ahead, Georgian College will be assisting some of the students affected by the recent announcement that Laurentian University will no longer be offering programs in Barrie. The college will be accommodating first- and second-year business and commerce students to ensure that they finish their degrees.

I congratulate Georgian College, through the university partnership, for their continuing leadership in education.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to rise today and speak about the 2016 Ontario budget. I want to congratulate Minister Sousa on releasing an impressive budget that includes free tuition for low-income families, \$345 million in new hospital funding and more money for affordable housing, all while on track to eliminate the deficit.

But with International Women's Day right around the corner, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak about the progress Ontario is making in assisting women. I recently held a round-table discussion with women's groups from the Halton region. We talked about a range of issues, including ways to help single mothers and women who have left abusive situations. A key component to beginning a new chapter in their lives is education. The budget announcement of free tuition for students with a family income of \$50,000 or less will offer many mature women and single parents a second chance. It will help single mothers send their kids to school, but also allow low-income women to go to school themselves.

In addition, there's the affordable housing piece: Raising funding to \$178 million is important to help these women get the support they need.

Ontario also now has a targeted strategy to end violence against indigenous women. Over three years, Ontario will spend \$100 million, mostly on support of families of indigenous women, who are three times more likely to experience violence and be murdered than other women in Ontario.

I'm proud of the work the government has done to help women, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to keeping the conversation going.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their statements.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended

appointments dated March 1, 2016, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related members.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Carried.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to

come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I totally agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Jessie.

### ACCIDENT BENEFITS

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I also want to quickly acknowledge Qusai Gulamhusein, who is in the members' gallery, as one of the people integral in making the petition possible.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:"

Whereas "Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident....," and

Whereas "the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, house-keeping, and caregiving. Furthermore, repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries involving fractures.

1520

"This petition it is to validate that the \$3500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury ... to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status. Removing sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule will enable the right efforts for accident victims with soft tissue injury to receive the adequate assessment....

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:"

To remove the minor injury guideline "sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule," and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.

I agree with the petition, I will affix my signature and hand it to Owen.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition here from residents in Welland and Thorold, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.



“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on ... private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41” through to royal assent upon its passage.

I agree with it, affix my name and give it to Andrew to bring down.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to the petition, and I’ll send it to the table with page Laura.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and send it with page Delaney.

#### ELDER ABUSE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

“Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

“Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse;

“Whereas research showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members;

“Whereas financial and emotional abuse are the most frequently reported elder abuse cases;

“Whereas current Ontario legislation incorporates the Residents’ Bill of Rights, mandates abuse prevention, investigation and reporting of seniors living in either long-term-care facilities or retirement homes;

“Whereas the majority of the seniors currently and in the future live in the community;

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will ensure seniors living in the community have the same protection and support as those seniors living in long-term-care facilities and retirement homes;

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, requiring health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office.”

I support the petition, and I give my petition to page Dhruv.

## LANDFILL

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here, signed by a great number of my constituents. It is a repeat of the petition I've had here a number of times, but on behalf of these petitioners, I'd like to read it into the record.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and the quality of life for all future generations;

"Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which will have significant human and financial costs for;

"Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents' physical, financial, emotional and mental" health "well-being;

"Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

"Whereas the county of Oxford has passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on landfill construction or approval;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly" of Ontario "as follows:

"To implement a moratorium in Oxford county on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

"That this review of alternatives would give special emphasis on (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can efficiently and practically be recycled or reused so as to not require disposal in landfills."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have this petition that has been signed by over 1,000 people from Nickel Belt. I'd like to thank Ashley Whitnall, who signed this. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Sayeem to bring it to the Clerk.

## LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition here. I've been getting these from across Ontario. This one's from Toronto residents, and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41" to passage "and to seek royal assent" as soon as it does.

I agree with it, affix my name and send it with page Owen.

1530

## ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome," known as aHUS, "an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

"Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis ther-



apies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults” living “with this catastrophic disease;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the desk with Suzanne.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have a petition that comes from all over Nickel Belt and Sudbury, and I want to thank Gis  le Poirier from Chelmsford in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

“Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa have been eliminated;....

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you.

The member for Cambridge.

WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, a concentration providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentration to protect against adverse health effects; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to Charlotte to bring down.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, March 7, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday, March 8, 2016, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 163:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Wednesday, March 16, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, March 21, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Tuesday, March 22, 2016, at 4:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, March 23, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The deputy House leader has moved government notice of motion 62. To the minister.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I would like to begin by indicating and introducing, in the gallery, a number of guests who are here to view the proceedings this afternoon: from the Police Association of Ontario, Stephen Reid; from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Carmen Santoro, Ernie Thorne and Chris Francescone; and from the Ontario Provincial Police Association, Rob Jamieson, Chris Hoffman and Josh Jutras. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly here in the gallery.

1540

This important piece of legislation would provide a sense of security to Ontario's first responders. If passed, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act will create a presumption that PTSD diagnosed in first responders is a result of the worker's employment. This ensures that first responders will not have to go through the process of proving their PTSD, which we know can lead to further stress and delay in treatment. We want to make sure that those who need the help get it, and get it as soon as they can. That is why it's so important we move quickly with this legislation. We need to pass Bill 163 so that more first responders in Ontario suffering from PTSD can get the help they need as quickly as possible.

All parties have stated in the Legislature that they will be supporting this bill during second reading.

During second reading debate, I noted that the member for London-Fanshawe stated, "This is a very profound bill because PTSD is something that workers on the front lines, first responders, have been fighting really hard to make this government acknowledge is a workplace injury, and that it's life-changing when someone experiences post-traumatic stress disorder."

Also during second reading debate, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound stated, "There is no doubt that first responders deal with harsh realities every day, and they need Bill 163 so that they can get the help they need to deal with PTSD."

The member for Wellington-Halton Hills stated, "Clearly, I think there's an emerging consensus in this House that this bill, Bill 163, is a good bill that should pass into law."

He also said, "Certainly, on our side of the House, we believe that this is legislation whose time has come, and we would hope to see it considered on the fast track."

Finally, the member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills stated the following: "As a society, it's good that we are talking here today and we have this bill, which I'm sure will pass, because nobody in this House would not support it."

Will all-party support for second reading, it is now time we move forward with Bill 163 and bring it before a committee. Speaker, there has been considerable debate on this bill and the ideas of this bill and we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. It is time, we believe, that we end second reading and we refer the bill to committee. In committee, stakeholders will present their views. We'll be able to hear directly from the public their thoughts on this bill. Committee members will have an opportunity to move amendments to the bill. I urge all members of this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

From time to time—and I understand this when there's a contentious piece of legislation that comes before the House and the government decides to bring forward a time allocation motion to put some definition to the amount of time that would be allocated to debate—there's some considerable opposition to that, and that's understandable when there's a contentious bill before the House. In this particular case, it's a bill which the three parties have agreed to. Indeed, individual members of the parties have over the years brought forward the idea that such legislation, in some form, would be beneficial to the public; the government members have done something similar. There's been widespread consultation that's taken place before the bill was brought before the House. There has been, I think, a good debate on second reading, and I indicated in my remarks that there were a number of individuals on the opposition side who had indicated that they wish to see this bill proceed—some, I will mention, on the fast track.

That is why the government is moving forward at this time to proceed to a stage where the bill goes to



committee. Much of the good work that we have done in this Legislature as a whole has been done in committee. I always like to have the opportunity to hear those who make representations to the committee make those representations in a forthright fashion and be questioned by members of the committee. We're able, then, to glean what the opinion is on individual aspects of the bill. Subsequent to that, there's an opportunity for members from all of the three parties in the House to make necessary amendments that they deem to be valuable in terms of strengthening the bill in one way or another.

Then there's the final debate which takes place on third reading. I can recall that when the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's father was in the House—I served with his father—we did not have third reading debate. It was a formality, a nod. We have determined that it is valuable at the present time that we have that.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** What about my grandfather? Were you here then?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The member is making some indication I was here before the last century. It's true; I was here in the last century.

That is why I suspect—though I can never really predict—that there's a pretty good consensus that this isn't a bad motion to have before us, so that we can proceed with the bill. I want to commend all members of the Legislature who have to this point in time in second reading made an intervention or publicly expressed their views on this piece of legislation. With that, I'll resume my seat and look forward to listening in rapt attention to my other colleagues in the House who will be presenting their views.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I appreciate the introduction on the part of the deputy House leader, the member from St. Catharines since Moby Dick was a minnow. I agree with almost everything the member said. Some of it was quotes from my own colleagues. Obviously, they must be right.

But I must say that in my time here—it doesn't go back to the beginnings of the—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** The last century.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, it doesn't even go back to the last century. You're right, I say to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

I have never once voted in favour of a time allocation motion.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** And this is the first time?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And there is a first time for everything, I say to the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. However, this all could have been avoided.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, yes. We indicated from the very first day that we wanted to see this legislation move ahead and we wanted to see it passed. I was somewhat surprised yesterday when our staff handed me a copy of the time allocation motion that had been tabled by the

government. I said, "My God, that's unnecessary. Why didn't they just come and say, 'We'd like to end this debate'?"

We have no reason to continue at all. We would have ended that debate without having to spend two more hours of debate on a time allocation motion. We were prepared to see this end and move forward because, as the members indicated, we are absolutely, completely in favour of the legislation. We will have hearings; we'll see if there are ways we can strengthen it and make it better. But we're absolutely in favour of it because, as the member said, we have come to conclude, based on good evidence and having had a lot of discussions with members of the first responders groups over the years, that it's not a discussion that we need to have anymore from that perspective. We understand the terrible condition of PTSD and how it affects the members of those first responders groups. We want to move as quickly as possible.

I want to point out that since our leader, Patrick Brown, was elected to his seat here in Simcoe North, it has been one of his priorities to move quickly with PTSD being a presumptive illness and that it would be deemed that it was acquired as a result of on-the-job activities as part of their employment. That's something that Mr. Brown has moved consistently since he got here.

I want to thank Cheri DiNovo, the member from Parkdale–High Park, for her Bill 2. That was sort of the genesis of this most recent debate on whether or not we would move with the presumption of PTSD and how we would deal with it. I want to thank her for doing that.

But also, let's not forget that one of his first questions since he got here was on PTSD for first responders.

1550

That's not the debate at all anymore. I can't even imagine having to deal with the situations that our first responders deal with on a daily basis and then to have to wonder what it's going to mean if I'm feeling that I can't do my job properly right now because I'm under such stress because of the things that happened on the job, wondering, "How do I approach that? How am I going to be viewed by my colleagues? How am I going to be viewed by my neighbours?"—all those kinds of things.

Nobody wants to say, "I'm suffering from PTSD." When you know what world we live in, when you actually come to that conclusion that, "I really think I need to be off the job; I'm really not feeling right," you must have gone through all kinds of difficult decisions within yourself to come to that conclusion.

When that happens, we've got to be there to support our first responders and to give them the supports that they need to get well again. Because that's what we want for our first responders: We want them to be healthy so that they can do the job to the best of our abilities. But they're not going to be healthy if we're not taking care of them when they're in those situations. So we've indicated our full support for this legislation from the get-go.

Now, Speaker, I do want to read some amendments—an amendment; I only got one—to that motion that was

tabled by the deputy House leader. It affects the witnesses at committee, how much time etc. But it also affects third reading debate because—well, I'll read the motion and then I'll explain it afterwards.

I move that the second, third and fourth bullets in the paragraph that begins "That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair," be struck out and replaced with the following:

"—That the deadline for requests to appear be 3 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

"—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; or

"—In the event of oversubscription, following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee or designate with a list of requests to appear; and

"—That the subcommittee member or designate prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

"—That each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and"

And that the paragraph beginning "That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called" be struck out and replaced with:

"That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 15 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate and amendment; and"

I will give that to Andrew to take to the table.

Now, the reason—oh, he has got to read that in? Okay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved—

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Dispense? Back to Mr. Yakabuski.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much.

So the reason we made those amendments is that we've increased the length of time that a witness has to speak before the committee, because I have found that here in this Legislature, five minutes is—in fact, I've been speaking for almost eight—barely enough time to clear your throat. It is important that the people who do come before committee, who are offering what we hope is enhancing our ability to improve the bill, have adequate time. This still gives the committee members nine minutes for questions, but the deputant has 10 minutes to speak, not five.

Once we are done that committee, and because we are all in favour of the legislation and want to see that it is passed as quickly as possible, it is not necessary for us to be speaking for two hours on third reading debate, because there will be no more amendments. There's not an opportunity for amendments. It is time to move on and pass the bill as quickly as possible. I think the members on the government side will probably be happy—I hope

my friends in the New Democrats will be as well—that we can shorten third reading debate and end this thing after 15 minutes, with five minutes apportioned to each party. Maybe it will even be the leaders who speak to this, because this is a historic piece of legislation that we're all going to be very proud of, and it's going to do the right thing by our first responders and make their lives better and make our province better and safer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, excuse me; I've got a bit of a cold. I want to speak in opposition to both the time allocation motion and the amendments put forward by the Conservative Party, and give the rationale why.

But before I do that, I want to state the obvious: The New Democratic Party supports this legislation. In fact, it was through our caucus, through our member, that we brought this bill forward not once but five times, and finally we've gotten as far as we have now.

What really is a bit galling about this process—and I'm speaking as a House leader—is that we sat at House leaders' meetings before the House actually started to sit and we had a bit of a discussion about, "What do you think is going to happen as far as the process on the PTSD bill?" We were pretty categorical with Mr. Naqvi, the House leader for the Liberal Party, that we were not looking to hold this up. In fact, what we wanted, which was more important, was less time in the House but more time in committee. We thought it was important that people who are affected by this bill, who either are happy with it or who are happy with it but would like to see changes, have time in committee to propose those changes, and that we have sufficient time to get this bill right. As you know, you are in the line of fire. You are the ones that the people here are visiting, who are in fact the ones having to live with this bill once it's passed.

There are some parts of this bill that, quite frankly, can be strengthened. Why is it that we're limiting people being able to put in claims from a 24-month period before? People have suffered PTSD far before that, and for them to be excluded doesn't make a lot of sense. I know that members of my caucus are going to speak to some of those issues in more detail. I want to talk about the procedure.

What the government is doing is playing a bit of a game here. They want to make it look as if, "Look at us. We're doing something on PTSD. We're so great. We're the Liberal Party. Look over here. Look over here." But in the meantime, rather than sit down with the House leaders—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You weren't even at the House leaders' meeting, so how would you even know?

My point is that rather than sitting down with the House leaders and having a discussion about how we can move this through in some sort of process that works for the government, because they want to get this bill through the order paper and dealt with as a time management issue in the House—in relation to the mover of the



initial bill, who was Ms. Cheri DiNovo, and those firefighters and police officers and others who are affected, how do we get this through the House with a reasonable amount of debate, but not a filibuster, and a reasonable amount of time in committee to be able to deal with this? That's the question.

The government never came to the opposition Conservatives or New Democrats to say, "How do we do that?" Instead, all of a sudden, I'm standing at my office door yesterday or the day before, and the Clerk walks by and gives me a time allocation motion. That was the first communication we had from the government House leader about how we were going to deal with the process. It seems to me that that's a pretty failing way of negotiating. Imagine: The only way you're able to deal with legislation is to send the opposition House leaders a time allocation motion rather than trying to work out how we're able to deal with this.

I ask you this very simple question: Is there anybody in this House who is going to vote against this bill? No. Everybody is going to vote for it. I say again that all of us agree: Cheri DiNovo, the New Democratic member of this caucus who has moved this issue forward through the House a number of times; the Minister of Labour, who saw fit to bring a piece of legislation in order to deal with it; and the opposition Conservatives. It wasn't as if there was going to be a filibuster either at committee or in the House. It was a question that we need to make sure we get it right.

Here's what we're having to deal with now, and it's an issue and a problem: According to the time allocation motion put forward by the government, the deadline to appear before the committee is 4 o'clock on March 3. There's a whole bunch of people who don't know that. I'll bet you there's a whole bunch of people in this House who don't know what the time set to be a witness before this committee was in the time allocation motion because most people don't read the order paper.

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If I'm a firefighter sitting out in Timmins or I'm a police officer out in Leeds-Grenville or I'm an emergency worker of any type in downtown Toronto or wherever you might be in this province, you'd better communicate to the assembly by 4 o'clock on March 3 or else you're not going to have an opportunity to appear before this committee. Is that fair?

Oh, and the Conservative say, "We have an amendment. We're going to fix this." Do you know what their amendment is? Rather than the deadline being 4 o'clock, they're moving it back to 3 o'clock. You'll have even less time with the proposed amendment by the Conservatives. So there's a bit of game-playing here.

The Liberals are trying to shame the opposition parties into fast-tracking a bill and not giving, more importantly, the stakeholders a chance to have their say in committee and, even more importantly—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Excuse me. I'd like to remind the speaker to address the—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —being able to speak to the issue of—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd just like to remind the member that in debate, I would appreciate you addressing the Speaker's chair, please.

Continue with the debate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you for your guidance, Speaker.

I say again, the issue is that most members would not even know that the timeline was March 3 at 4 o'clock. It doesn't give those people who are here and those people in Ontario who want to speak to this bill and propose amendments the time to be able to do so. By the time people find out, it's going to be too late. I'll guarantee you, there will be people who want to present to this committee and who will find out, to their chagrin, that they can't get standing before the committee because the government, with the support of the Conservatives, by moving a sub-amendment to the time allocation motion, wants to truncate when it is that somebody is able to apply.

The second thing is the list. This is an important issue. They're saying the list will be on a first-come, first-served basis. What we've tried to do before—and when you're able to negotiate these things, it's always better. You say, "Okay, how much time do we have?" We have X number of days, which equals so many spots. Then you say, "Okay, each caucus gets an equal number of people who are able to present." You give your five or your six or your 10, depending on how much time you've got.

The government is playing a bit of a game here. They're saying it's first-come, first-served. So this is how it's played: If they're trying to skew in a particular direction, they'll just flood the lines; they'll flood the emails. They'll tell their people, "Make sure you're sitting with your finger on the 'send' button the moment this time allocation passes."

Is that a fair way of dealing with firefighters and other emergency workers in this province, who have been working years to get to this point? I'm not saying, as a New Democrat and as the House leader for the NDP, that we've got to hold this up, and there are 50 people in the opposition who want to speak to this at second reading. No, no. Nobody is saying that. We actually told the government House leader that we had no intent to drag this in a second reading debate at any real length. We were waiting for the government to come back to us; they never did. I think my friend the Tory whip can confirm that. So instead, we're faced with time allocation. I just think for the process, it makes for bad legislation.

We've waited how many years to get where we are? How many years have we been trying to get PTSD legislation passed in this House?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Eight.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** It's been eight years we've been waiting, as far as the time that Ms. DiNovo moved it forward. But it's an issue that emergency workers have been working on for many years.

Waiting an extra week so that we can have time in committee is hardly a burden. In fact, we'll probably end

up—secret—with a better bill. But here's the rub: The government has no interest in having more time in committee or giving people more time to reflect, because the bill they want to pass is the one that they drafted, with no amendments. That's what they're up to. I don't believe that's the way the Legislature should operate, and it's certainly not the way we should be treating emergency workers across this province. It should be about, "Let's listen to what people have to say."

And you know what? I was on that side of the House. Je me souviens, as they say. There are times when a government has to dig in and decide that this is what they're going to do. I get it. We've all done it, those of us who served in government.

But what I have noticed over the years I've been here is that when government actually gives an opportunity for people to depute to the committee, to listen to what they have to say, to reflect on what was presented and see if there are amendments that will actually make this bill work better, it's a good thing, not only for the stakeholders, but it's a really good thing for democracy and, I would argue, a good thing for members and a good thing for the government.

So I say now that we will vote against this time allocation, not because we're opposed to the bill—quite the contrary: We think the bill is certainly a step in the right direction. But I can tell you, the little amount of time that we have in committee we will utilize in order to hear what people have to say and hopefully propose amendments. But I say now, given what you've set up in this time allocation motion, there is very little opportunity to do so. It tells me that the government is up to what they normally do, which is, "Hey everybody, look at us. We've got this shiny bauble over here you can all look at," and this is somehow a really, really good thing. But when you look at the details, the shiny bauble can be made into a bill that actually works for emergency workers across this province, and I very much fear that the amendments we need we will not get because of this flawed process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to have my chance, finally, to speak to Bill 163, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, 2016, in terms of post-traumatic stress.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to welcome leadership from the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit disappointed to have to condense my remarks. I had a full 20, of course, but with time allocation, I've had to condense that down to 10 minutes and unfortunately leave out many of the voices I was hoping to bring with me today to this conversation.

First, I'm pleased to recognize the tireless and committed advocacy and heart that my colleague from Parkdale-High Park, Cheri DiNovo, has invested for

years to bring awareness and support to workers, to our first responders when it comes to mental health and PTSD. Again, thank you to Cheri for the work that she has done on their behalf for seven years until Bill 2 this session.

It is my privilege to act as the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services. I'm pleased to rise today and share not only my thoughts but the voices of first responders. The strength of the front-line workers who have shared their stories with Ontario does so much to not only educate but to break down the stigma surrounding mental health struggles.

We need all of those who suffer from PTSD to have the support that they need, and this bill will allow first responders with a PTSD diagnosis to get a fast pass through the WSIB system because their diagnosis will be presumed to be a result of on-the-job trauma. This is huge.

I would like to remind the Legislature of some of what Minister Flynn said in his remarks. He explained, "Under our current system, a worker that's suffering from traumatic mental stress that has a diagnosis such as PTSD must prove to the WSIB that the injury is, in fact, work-related. What this often asks the individual to do is to relive the incident, sometimes over and over and over again, as the evidence is being collected. That could have the impact of actually increasing the trauma that's associated with the disorder."

The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour also referred to this arduous WSIB process and called it an "inquisition."

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminding the government of their own words and their own convictions, because here we have a piece of legislation that will affect almost all of our first responders but that specifically leaves out a handful. Effectively, by ruling them out, this government is admittedly keeping them in the WSIB inquisition line, which can re-traumatize, and that is wrong and it's avoidable.

I met correctional officer Erich Hunting at one of the first jails that I visited. He suffers from PTSD that made itself manifest after a brutal and traumatizing incident with a ceramic knife—a knife that can only be detected by scanners that haven't been put in jails yet. I asked him about his experience through the system, and I'd like to share what he told me about the system:

"Now that I have the doctor's note and the psych report saying that I have the diagnosis, that it was a workplace injury, it's been very easy to deal with. Getting approved was difficult. Proving that the mental injury came from work and not outside of work was difficult to prove. They went through my entire life ... and were trying to find something else in my childhood or my past that could have triggered the PTSD so that they could decide it wasn't work. I kept second-guessing. Because the threat of the situation wasn't at me; the inmate wasn't trying to stab me.... They were saying, 'You weren't directly assaulted and it wasn't directed at you; then why did that incident make you feel the way it



did?' The awful thing is that I didn't ask to feel that way. Trust me, I didn't ask to be put in that position and I would have traded it for anything, to not feel that way, and now I have to explain why I feel the way I do."

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Mr. Speaker, this is not a process that any of our emergency responders should ever have to endure.

During the winter intersession, I visited 15 jails and correctional centres across the province and half a dozen probation and parole offices. I could talk for days about what I have learned, and any time the minister would like a comprehensive briefing, I would be more than pleased to arrange one. But, for today, I think it more important to hear from our first, and constant, responders in corrections.

You will remember that there was a violent hostage-taking at the Thunder Bay jail that stretched through the night. Murray Butler was the correctional officer taken hostage but not the only officer forever affected. I promised Murray that I would share some of his words today. He says:

"Life in Thunder Bay changed for a lot of people on the evening of December 7 ... and we are all trying to cope with things in our own way....

"I am dealing with my own symptoms of PTSD, such as anxiety, nightmares, guilt, recurring unwanted memories, reliving the trauma, flashbacks, inability to sleep and even thoughts of suicide. The list goes on and on. Unfortunately I am not the only correctional officer/first responder that is dealing with PTSD as a result of this riot and hostage-taking. I can only hope the best for them. I also know that there are many other COs and first responders across the province that have had to deal with traumatic events and are suffering from PTSD. That is why I was overjoyed when I heard that corrections were recognized as part of the PTSD bill!

"I was very fortunate the night of the riot and hostage-taking to be supported by a group of professionals whom I know without a doubt saved my life.... I am so grateful to the people and groups that donated to my GoFundMe campaign. It allowed me and my family to go on a vacation. It was truly humbling....

"I hope that this government wakes up and does everything in its power to ensure that my brothers and sisters have a safe place to work....

"Cheers, Murray...."

Speaker, the government included corrections in this bill, but then arbitrarily crossed off some of the officers on the list.

This is from a letter written by Greg Arnold, a provincial bailiff and MERC team member, who was a correctional officer before being a bailiff and who has worked for MCSCS for 33 years. He says:

"There are 30 classified bailiffs in Ontario that are assigned to various institutions. There are not enough of us to do the work....

"Our bailiffs are critical incident stress managers, ICIT members and incident negotiators.

"By the definition of the bill for correctional officers we meet and exceed the duties and responsibilities.

"In order to compete to become a bailiff you must first be a correctional officer. Our department is comprised of some of the most experienced officers....

"We have been involved in accidents on the highway where our members have provided emergency first aid to members of the public and offenders.... Many times we have been first responders on fatal accidents and have not only done our role but have taken control of scenes and provided emergency services.

"If this bill passed as written, you can have two correctional staff working the same traumatic incident; one would be covered under this bill; the other would be out in the cold....

"This omission is a huge injustice to the dedicated officers that are correctional officers but are classified as bailiffs."

Speaker, the Police Association of Ontario also feels that this bill ought to be broadened to include special constables and others. I know we will have the chance to discuss this during committee, but basically it does not make sense to leave bailiffs and special constables out of this legislation.

Another group that has been inappropriately excluded are probation and parole officers. Danielle is an officer, and I would be pleased to share her words. Danielle says:

"I have been a probation and parole officer for 10 years. In one year, I lost five clients to overdose and suicide.... Every year, usually around the Christmas holidays, I receive phone calls from clients who are suicidal and attempting to kill themselves....

"I have witnessed victims of domestic violence, battered, bleeding and bruised as they've attended my office unannounced and in crisis. I have listened to young children, sobbing as they've disclosed sexual abuse at the hands of a family member. I have coaxed car keys out of the hands of a client who was so high on opiates that he was disrobing in my office to scratch the ... lesions that covered his torso. I've sat across from a client who had sewn a stab wound on his neck together with shoelaces. I attended a home visit to deliver bad news to a client, when, moments after I left, he shot himself. I remember thinking to myself, 'What if he had turned the gun on me? ....' I have been stalked. I have found sexually suggestive notes on my car windshield as it sat in my work parking lot. I have had to sit with the justice official protection and intelligence service while they educated me about how to safeguard my home and worksite to protect myself from threatening clients and stalkers. I have had clients pull knives out of their socks and waistbands on several occasions. If I, as a probation officer, have not been exposed to trauma, please tell me how you would define my experiences! ....

"While I have been fortunate enough not to develop PTSD as a result of my experiences, I have not walked away unscathed. This accumulation of these events means that I will now battle an anxiety disorder for the rest of my life. It is difficult to share this admission but at a time where probation officers are being denied mental health support and have been excluded from legislation

that can assist them in securing adequate treatment for post-traumatic stress, I felt it necessary. While I continue to love my job, it has most certainly come at a cost....

"Do the right thing and ensure our inclusion in PTSD legislation."

Speaker, this shouldn't be an argument about the label of "first responder," because this legislation is meant to support those who need it most. So I would challenge this government to figure out who experiences trauma the most and cover them. Consider all front-line workers and broaden the reach of presumptive coverage. All 911 communicators—not just dispatcher—police investigative support and forensic staff, nurses, children's aid workers and Ministry of Labour inspectors are among others to consider and support. They, like so many others, need support and care. Factor them in, please.

If you won't do it in this bill, then see this bill as the first step in the journey to supporting mental health needs across Ontario. They look after us; we need to look after them. In considering all that our first responders do for us, the least we can do is get the legislation right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? I recognize the member from Welland—from Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It's right beside Welland, yes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise to speak to Bill 163, the Supporting Ontario First Responders Act, today because it's an incredibly important piece of legislation. The first responders I have had the pleasure to meet over the course of my career have always been some of the bravest and most caring individuals I know. Their support for family and loved ones in times of need, and of course their professional care for those who have been injured, is nothing short of heroic.

We need to do everything we can in our power to ensure that these brave men and women always have the care they need and deserve. Whether that means doing everything we can to protect them while they are on the job or doing everything we can to ensure their continued health and success as they move on from their working lives, we need to do it.

I'd like to commend my colleague the member from Parkdale-High Park for her work on recognizing this incredible need in our community.

When this bill first came across my desk, my first thought was to talk directly to first responders in my riding. They are the ones who deal with these traumatic events every single day and they are the ones who know what they need. I recognize that they are the heroes in my community and I do my very best to bring their voices to this legislation. I do that to thank them for the jobs they do when they are on the clock but also what they do when they're off the clock.

Let me start with the local dispatchers who work in Niagara. At first, some people wonder why they might be covered by something like this, but if you stop and think about it for a few seconds, it becomes very clear. In Niagara, we have about seven dispatchers working

during the day to serve over 430,000 people. So, say, six or seven accidents occur on a given day. It isn't always going to be the same first responder going to these calls. It might be the Niagara Falls firefighters or the volunteers in Fort Erie or paramedics going to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Yet with each of these calls, there's a chance that it could be the same dispatcher on the other end of the line.

My office has had a chance to speak with the president of the dispatchers and paramedics association in my riding, and the local's WSIB specialist, Jim Simpson. Though Jim wears many hats with the local, we spoke with him because he specializes in helping his members navigate WSIB. Jim and Jon see first-hand the struggles that their members have to go through when they are battling PTSD. For years, they have had to watch their members struggle with these issues without support.

I can tell you these two men are dedicated to their profession and dedicated to the safety of the men and women whom they work shoulder to shoulder with each day. Altogether they are looking after 32 dispatchers and 330 paramedics. With numbers like that, it's easy to see the risk of incidents that brave men and women face each and every single day that they walk into the workplace.

What Jon and Jim were able to highlight to our office was even more incredible. These paramedics and dispatchers have absolutely known the risk they have been facing for decades—for decades. In the first six weeks of this year alone, they have had six people in their profession take their lives.

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Mr. Speaker, I've also had a chance to speak to my good friend Todd Brunning, who is the president of the local Niagara Falls Professional Fire Fighters Association. Once again, I've worked with Todd on a number of issues. I can tell you that this is a man who deeply cares about the men and women he represents. If Todd is pushing for health and safety, then I absolutely believe it is good for the people who live in my riding. He's a man with a big heart, and he is never quiet when it comes to his beliefs on taking care of his members.

He said something I'd like to quote here. He said to us that seeing these traumatic events is "the nature of our work—it's something that never leaves you." Mr. Speaker, I really think that quote is important. It shows that these men and women know what kind of stress their jobs can cause them and they know that they will see things that will never leave them—that will never, never leave them. Yet every morning they get up and they commit to keeping our cities and our towns safe because they know that someone has to do it. These first responders are always there for us when we need them, and I'm glad to see that we're finally going to be there for them when they need us.

One of the things Todd highlighted and that I've heard when talking to first responders throughout my riding is that they still need to overcome the stigma. A lot of times, these first responders believe that this is just something that comes with the job and that they don't have the right to say something, or that somehow speaking out makes them weak.



I believe I stand with my colleagues in this House today when I say that they absolutely have the right and that there's nothing weak about it. First responders have the right to seek professional help. There's nothing to be ashamed of. I don't believe anyone here thinks that paramedics, dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, correctional officers or any other first responders have an easy job. Anyone in these professions experiences things that most of us couldn't possibly imagine, and there's absolutely no shame in saying that something is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, there is something else that I realized when my office was reaching out to first responders. Whenever we talked to them, regardless of what profession they were in, they were happy to see each other being included in this bill. It's incredible to see them looking out for one another like this. I think it highlights why they are such an important part of making our communities so great. Yes, they want coverage for their members, but they also care for other people working in stressful industries. They're willing to work together and help one another, and it's a very moving thing.

While I have the time to speak, I'd like to quickly highlight a few concerns they brought up with the government bill.

The first has to do with the WSIB bridging. The dispatchers highlight that right now, when full-time dispatchers are going through the WSIB process for PTSD assistance, they are being paid out of sick time. When it's a part-timer who falls into this situation, they have no money coming in at all. Not only are they struggling to cope with traumatic events they have experienced, but they are running into financial hardship. If we're going to ensure that first responders are properly covered when they are at risk of PTSD, we might as well do it right, and we have the opportunity to include them today.

I'm going to finish by saying that it's my 20th anniversary today with my lovely wife. She was hit by a drunk driver on Lundy's Lane and she was fighting for her life. Guess who came. It was the paramedics; it was the firefighters who dug in there. My wife's foot was like this. Her femur was broken; her shoulder was destroyed; her ribs were cracked. She was this close to dying, and it was the firefighters, paramedics and OPP officers who saved my wife's life.

To this day, those firefighters, when they see my wife, they go up to her and ask her how she is. Now, she does have some struggles today, but think about it. That's just one accident. Look what it did to my daughter, who now has a mother who went from being able to play squash, being able to play softball, being able to go out for a walk, and who can't do it anymore. It affected the whole family. But the one thing you want to remember is that that's just one accident. Those firefighters saw that once. They see it every single day when they go to work. That's why this bill is so important. When my family needed them, they were there. Today, they need us, and we have to be there for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I, too, would like to welcome our visitors to Queen's Park from the OPP, from the police association and, of course, from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association, which I have a closer relationship to, given that I'm married to a firefighter.

I was elected eight and a half years ago. I would say eight years ago, I had my first visit from the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, Local 527. Rob Hyndman, Mark Muldoon and Kris Vopel came to see me. Their request was well articulated. They wanted presumptive legislation. Some of it was for cancer, but some of it was for PTSD. That was eight years ago.

Fast-forward to 2016: We finally have a piece of legislation that will make it to the finish line. So I, like my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, don't understand why we have this time allocation motion. We've waited a long time for this. Finally, this House is talking about mental health. Do you know how many weeks, months and years I've dreamed of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario talking positively about mental illness? Since day one that I've been here. Finally, we are doing this, and what does the government do? They say, "We don't want this bill to run its normal course. We will take our big boots, we will take our power as the party in power, and shut the whole thing down."

Unfortunately, there are people who will feel left out of this process, who have been there from the beginning, who want to be heard and who want to have the opportunity to speak out loud about their mental illness to the leadership of this province. How does that happen? It happens by each of us representing the people of our riding and bringing their voices forward. This is what we are there for. But lots of us won't have the opportunity to do this because the government has decided to pass this time allocation motion, which was not needed and, to me, is very disrespectful when you see things like, "You have until Thursday to put your name on the list."

I represent the people of Nickel Belt. Most of the people in my riding cannot have the parliamentary channel because we don't have cable in Nickel Belt, so they're not going to hear it through the television. By the time I send the email out to say, "Hey, you guys, if you want to be heard, you have until Thursday to come down from Nickel Belt to Toronto"—there's a good chance you'll have to take two days off. To ask your employers for two days off—it sometimes takes more than 24 hours to get permission granted. But this is what the government is doing.

We want this bill to make it to the finish line. Every single MPP in this Legislature agrees. We don't have unanimous agreement very often in this chamber, but on the need to bring PTSD legislation forward, we have that.

**1630**

But how do we use this rare time of unanimous agreement in this House? We have a Liberal government that says, "It's going to go that way. I don't care what the rest of you have to say, because we are Liberals and we know better." This is wrong. It feels wrong, it is wrong. It is disrespectful.

The people of Nickel Belt, like the people everywhere else in Ontario, have waited for a long time for this to come. This piece of legislation will be going to committee. This is great. I'm really happy, and I'm pretty sure that the leadership that is there today will make it to committee. But committee is for everybody. It is for anybody who lives in Ontario. This is their opportunity to bring their voice to the debate, to be heard, to bring new ideas forward so that we have as good a bill as we can get.

We know, Speaker—all of us know—that a bill is not an incremental thing. “Oh, well, let's pass this bill, and if we realize that we forgot this group, or that the 24 months back doesn't work, we'll change it.” No, no. Chances are, we pass this bill and it will never come again in our lifetime. It will be 50 years from now before we have an opportunity to make changes to that bill again. Let's take our time and do it properly.

We already know that there are some groups who want changes. We already know that the 24-month limit to go back may be problematic. As much as a lot of people are pushing so that PTSD falls under presumptive legislation—which means that you will be covered by WSIB, which means that not only will you not go into poverty—you will continue to have your wages—but it also means that you will have resources to gain treatment, because PTSD is treatable.

If you have access to the right mental health treatment, you will get better. The anxiety will go away. The flashbacks, the nightmares, all of this will go away if you get treatment. But access to mental health services in this province is horrible. Most people don't have access to mental health services, but once you're covered by WSIB, they will pay for you to go and see a psychologist. None of us have access to psychologists unless we have the money to pay, but now that we will have presumptive legislation, they will have access to mental health workers, and they will have access to psychologists, who will help them get better. They will get better. But do we expect a big flow of them? Absolutely not. We will continue to have just a few that come forward. What happens now is that they go through the wringer with WSIB and have a really tough time proving. Now it will become easier.

As some of my members have mentioned before, I think we got it wrong as to the list of people that should be covered. I think there are people within the health care system that should be there. I have a nurse sitting beside me. We have seen that a nurse who works in emerg for most of her career has seen it all. She will see the gun wounds and the stab wounds, and the people that explode. You see it all. This is also very traumatic, and this is also linked to work, but they're not included in there. So there are changes that need to be done to this bill now in order to get that right.

The normal process of the legislation gets us the best bills at the end. What the Liberals are really saying right now is that they know better, they have got this figured out, and they are not willing to listen. This is a sad day

for me. I'm happy that we're talking about mental health, I'm happy that we're talking about giving workers what is owed to them after they have waited for so long. But I am really disappointed in how we will get there, because there is a chance that we won't have the best bill in the end. It will have done something good, and I'm happy for the good that it will have done, but when you know that it could have done something better on an issue like mental health, which never gets spoken to in this House, what an opportunity lost. It saddens me to see this opportunity lost. We could have done better. We could have let this bill go through and had an extended period of time for people to come and speak and be heard—I'm not talking months; I'm talking maybe one more week—and we would have gotten to the finish line with something way better, that we will have to live with for decades to come.

So I'm happy that this is going forward, but I can't stand for time allocation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? Further debate?

On March 1, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 62. Mr. Yakabuski then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

“That the second, third and fourth bullets in the paragraph that begins ‘That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair’, be struck out and replaced with the following”—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Dispense.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Dispense? Agreed? All right.

We're now dealing with Mr. Yakabuski's amendment to the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say aye.

All those opposed, please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1637 to 1638.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I have just received a vote deferral:

“To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 62 be deferred until deferred votes on March 2, 2016.”

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Start the bells, please.

*The division bells rang from 1638 to 1639.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** All right. We will try this one more time:

“To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to government notice of motion number 62 be deferred until deferred votes” tomorrow; that would be March 2, 2016. This was received by the chief government whip, Marie-France Lalonde.

*Vote deferred.*



## WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT  
UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 25, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / *Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** When this item of business was last debated, we concluded the speech of the members for Northumberland–Quinte West, Burlington and Sudbury.

Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Again, I'm pleased to be able to lend my voice to this debate on Bill 151, because it's important that we recognize what's working and the areas that deserve some attention in committee. Through amendments, they hopefully can become better.

I just want to state, Speaker, that our position has been very clear. We welcome the policy reversal by this government and we support the elements within Bill 151 that reflect PC proposals to (1) increase recycling, (2) create good, well-paying jobs in the green economy, and (3) protect Ontario taxpayers by scrapping eco tax programs. Those eco tax programs, just to revisit, are e-waste, Orange Drop and the tire stewardship.

We're encouraged to see that the government is finally acknowledging the need for competition in this industry and, as such, they've included provisions within Bill 151 to apply competition rules.

But that's where we kind of draw the line in the sand, because we have substantive concerns that must be addressed once this bill hits committee. They are reasonable concerns, I would suggest, that require simple solutions. I just want to go back and touch on them a notch.

We want assurances that the eco tax programs will be eliminated so Ontario can transition to a producer responsibility framework that encourages greater waste diversion. I ask that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change be very clear. On one hand, he's suggesting that the Ontario Tire Stewardship program is already gone. Well, when you read down into the legislation of Bill 151, they do not have a timeline. There is nothing affirmative in the legislation, as it reads today. We want to make sure that there is a finite timeline.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to offer a couple of minutes on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Over on this side of the House, we welcome this legislation. We are pleased to see that, after almost a decade of doing very little to move the province forward on individual producer responsibility, finally we have a legislative

framework in place that's being debated through second reading and that will help us transition to where we need to be.

One of the issues that municipalities have been facing under the current system is the cost of operating a waste diversion program. I know that in my own municipality, London has been doing everything possible to try to divert waste in an effective and efficient way, and yet still we're only at about 45% waste diversion. We are below the provincial target. But it is a very, very costly system to run. The municipality is in the midst of a budget debate and is looking at green bins as another option that would help increase the waste diversion proportion that we're aiming for. It's a significant budget issue. It's looking at a potential cost of \$12 million. So one of the concerns we have about Bill 151 is ensuring that it doesn't download further costs onto municipalities while it moves the province forward in achieving those waste diversion goals that Ontarians all want to see.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Speaker, this bill has quite a history. The original bill was introduced, as I recall, in 2014, if not 2013, after great consultation took place.

I remember having the privilege of being Minister of the Environment at the time. I canvassed the views of the opposition at that time. It was the Conservative member for Kitchener who gave me some ideas he thought he would have in the bill, if he could bring forward a bill. I consulted with the NDP critic, who was then the member for Davenport. I consulted widely with industry, with municipalities. I can't think of anybody who didn't get canvassed on this issue.

The Environmental Commissioner took an unusual step of trying to bring people together on this particular issue. He held a round table, because he was the one, to his credit—Gord Miller—who brought this to the attention of the Legislature in one of his special reports, or his annual report. I think it had only one photograph of him in it, which is good, because I can remember that the Ombudsman's annual reports used to have 20 pictures in them.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Anyway, I'm getting away from the topic at hand; I understand that.

This is a bill that should have been passed two years ago. Well, it's back before the House. It has had debate in this House. It again has had yet another round of consultations. What in effect we have done is lost about two years' time on this particular bill, trying to ensure that it gets passed and gets implemented. If there is a virtue to minority government, I can't think of it right now, because it blocked this progressive piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I wanted to respond immediately after the member for St. Catharines, because I don't see history the way he does. I think there was a benefit, in a

minority Parliament, of taking the previous piece of legislation that the member talks about and having that debate in the Legislature. I believe that this bill, Bill 151, incorporated a number of things that were brought up during debate in this House, so I disagree with him.

I do agree with some of his points, I do acknowledge, and so did our critic the member for Huron-Bruce, about the former Environmental Commissioner Mr. Miller and the points that he brought forward.

We've had a system that has been in place for a long time, Speaker. I spoke earlier on this bill about my experience in the municipal sector. We had great intentions, back in the 1980s, when we started the Blue Box Program. But you now reflect on the numbers, and we didn't have those waste reduction numbers and waste diversion numbers that we had all hoped to have.

Rather than just dealing with this bill—and we support the bill, obviously; the critic has talked about some of the amendments—I think we've got a lot of co-operative work that could be done to try to educate the public on the importance of waste diversion. I think we've failed, in some respects, by having a bill in front of us today that talks more about enforcement. I don't know that that enforcement is the right way. I think there is a tremendous political will in this province to get this file correct and to make sure that we have a system in place that does divert materials that don't have to go into landfill into other projects. I spoke earlier about the fact that when we first had this program, we talked about reduce, reuse and recycle. I think we've missed some of those elements. I think we have a chance to right the wrong.

But I do disagree with the member who just spoke, from St. Catharines, that the bill should have passed in the previous Parliament. I think this bill was improved because of the minority Parliament.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for final comments.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I want to thank the members from Huron-Bruce and London West, the House leader and the member from Leeds-Grenville.

Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act: I think, as the deputy House leader mentioned, it has been around for a while in this place. I'm sure the walls are tired of hearing all the issues. But, Speaker, I'm glad to hear today, too, that there is some co-operation amongst all three parties and that we need to move the yardsticks forward. We'll have an opportunity, as it goes to committee, to make refinements.

I need to give a plug to Northumberland county, a part of my riding. Folks who travel the 401 east, as they go by Grafton, just before the Big Apple, will see a big recycling plant that Northumberland county, back in the late 1980s—I'm not sure; it was before my days in politics. They established an MRF, a municipal recycling facility. It's still operational today. They do a good job, but on the other hand, it's those municipal establishments that we need to do a refresh on.

1650

When we look at potential recycling material that gets ignored from packaging—I think I mentioned, when I was speaking last week on the bill, Speaker, that I marvel around Christmas time. We have nine grandkids. They are opening Christmas gifts, and sometimes the pile of packaging—I mean, it fills half of my garage. Although, when the kids were younger, they'd rather play with the packaging than the toy that was inside.

I'm encouraged that we're going to get to a place where we all agree, hopefully, and we'll have something to protect the environment for my kids, grandkids and great-grandkids.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm very pleased to have a few minutes in which to put on the record a few comments regarding Bill 151.

First, I would like to recognize the work of my caucus colleague the member for Huron-Bruce, who has been an advocate of this particular initiative for some time, and recognize the contributions that she's made over the time that this bill has been seen and the kind of work behind the scenes to bring it to the point we have today. Our caucus has made it very clear that this will be a bill that we support, but we recognize that there's a point where there is more to do.

The goals that we are looking for in this bill are very clear: firstly, to increase the total recycling across Ontario; to be able to put in place methods that will protect our environment for today and into the future; and, as an important by-product, to stimulate further the economy by creating good, well-paying jobs throughout the green economy.

For far too long, Ontario's waste diversion rate has been stagnant at 25%, actually showing negative growth since 2010. At the same time as we appear to be in this holding pattern, other provinces like British Columbia and Saskatchewan are increasing their capacity for waste diversion while Ontario falters and falls further behind.

By taking a further look into this issue, it is clear to see why Ontario has once again been left behind. A major factor which influences the growth of waste diversion in Ontario is the further encouragement of private businesses to invest in the recovery and recycling of new products. Yet, as a result of Liberal mismanagement for more than a decade, this government has relied on failed anti-market policies that have stopped Ontario from becoming the environmental leader it should be.

Our plan was based on a foundation that the recycling industry is a business, not a government program. In this industry, government is to have a limited role. Governments are to set measurable and achievable targets for business, set environmental standards and enforce regulations. It is an industry in which the private sector has encouraged competition, increased efficiency and advanced environmental protection.

In saying this, we appreciate that the Liberal government has acknowledged our previous attempts and



adopted many key points of our recycling plan that we first introduced four years ago. Even though we are happy to see the government's policy change, we remain opposed to unnecessary regulations, bureaucratic red tape and government intervention that lie hidden within the bill.

I want to speak for a moment about how this impacts on individuals as well as their neighbourhoods. As many would know from the name of my riding, York-Simcoe, I have a great deal of the shoreline of Lake Simcoe in my riding. It's remarkable when you see the concerted effort of all people—neighbours and friends, organizations, private donation and the kind of opportunity—that the problems of a place like Lake Simcoe, where we saw aquatic weed growth, where we saw phosphorus loading—these have been reduced. They have been reduced through things like this government's Lake Simcoe Protection Act, funding from the federal government, the conservation authority and many, many people—many volunteers, who have made time to plant trees, to work on shoreline or stream restoration. So it's a demonstration that there's a wide base of support, particularly when people can see benefits coming from that.

To go back, then, to the bill itself: This proposed legislation reflects many of the positions that the PC caucus has advocated for in previous legislative attempts and in many other submissions to government over the past few years, which focused on promoting the elements of a circular economy. It also mirrors many of the policies brought forward by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who have all strongly advocated for this legislation to be introduced—and certainly, reference was made to him a moment ago.

While I'm sure that Minister Murray should be commended today for finally introducing our recycling strategy in this legislation, we should also pay tribute to the environment critics of our parties—the NDP critics—and Mike Schreiner, the leader of the Green Party of Ontario, all of whom have had a role to play in pushing for this particular legislation.

At the same time that we have looked at the process, we have been concerned by the kinds of programs—for instance, the stewardship programs—that in fact pushed extra costs onto people without necessarily providing the kind of strength and opportunity that the bill deserves.

Recycling generates much more employment than disposal. It's estimated that with every 1,000 tonnes of recycled waste, it creates the equivalent of seven jobs. This is at the same time when 5% of Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions, a main contributor to climate change, come from waste, mostly as methane from landfill sites.

While municipal blue box programs are largely successful, keeping out two thirds of all residential printed paper and packaging from landfills, only 14% of such waste from commercial, industrial and institutional sectors is diverted. That's why, in 2012, our party brought forward a bold, new plan to increase waste diversion.

Certainly, that's the situation as we go forward with this bill. But I want to take a moment to look at a part of the population that is left out of this piece of legislation—and that's individual responsibility. I want to comment on the fact that we still have teams of people who go out every spring to pick up garbage along the roadside. We still have people who think it's okay to throw something out of their car as they're moving along. There are still people who feel that they have no obligation to sort their garbage, to be able to make the best of it. I think it's something that needs addressing, even though it isn't strictly in this particular bill. Personal responsibility is key to recognizing—whether it's on the side of the road or it's having a composter in your backyard.

1700

In the municipality in which I live, we began a buck a bag for garbage years ago. Everyone said, "This will never work," and of course, it worked. There were a few people who tossed their bag aside and then discovered there was a \$100 fine if you were caught doing this—generally, within that bag was something that identified you, whether it was an old bill or a piece of mail. But it pointed out, and it worked. Today, the buck a bag has made a huge difference.

Someone was talking about Christmas wrap and all the garbage. I can tell you that the first year it was in place, there was a bag or a box of recycled paper. Everybody had carefully folded their wrapping paper and put it in a box, like a rewrapped Christmas present. It's those kinds of things that I think will also go a long way.

I'm looking forward to the passage of this bill, although I take the title of the bill, "waste-free," as perhaps being a stretch objective. Nevertheless, in this particular case, I think it won't do us any harm if we stretch to reduce landfill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to rise to offer some thoughts on the comments by the member from York-Simcoe. She made some excellent points, particularly her final point about the stretch goal of Bill 151. It's interesting that the bill is called the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and yet, in the list of provincial interests that are identified in the legislation and the strategy that is required by the legislation, nowhere does it explicitly and specifically state that one of the goals of this bill is zero waste in this province.

We welcome this legislation. We definitely believe that Ontario needs to move to individual producer responsibility. In fact, we should have been there years ago, so we're pleased to see that we're moving in that direction now; we've turned the corner and are sort of heading in the right direction. But we're very concerned that this bill is vague on details; there are no targets, no timelines. It's an optimistic kind of look at what the province could be, but without some meat on those bones, it's going to be very difficult to achieve what the bill is supposed to achieve.

When this bill is brought forward to committee, Speaker, you can be assured that New Democrats are

going to be seeking amendments to introduce more accountability and hold the government responsible for delivering on the aims this bill is supposed to achieve.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 151. I listened to the comments made by my colleague from York-Simcoe with respect to this proposed bill, but I also heard her colleague from Leeds-Grenville talking about the fact that the bill only focuses on enforcement. I'm going to remind the members opposite that in schedule 2, it is very explicitly stated: "The purposes of the act, as set out in section 1, are to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste, to provide for the operation of waste diversion programs approved under the Waste Diversion Act, 2002."

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, it is pretty explicit that it's not just about enforcement. It talks about promotion, educating the public, reducing and reusing and, if possible, recycling. The act focuses on three parts: increasing waste diversion, keeping valuable resources out of landfill—we know that we have to do better—and then, more importantly, addressing the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our waste stream.

The proposed legislation, Bill 151, if passed—this was clearly also discussed in the proposed budget that the Minister of Finance tabled last week. I know that the members opposite may not agree with the government. We all agree in this House and out there in the community that we have major concerns about climate change. The proposed legislation, if passed, will address part of it.

I know the member from York-Simcoe briefly mentioned the blue boxes. I want to pay tribute to the biggest supporters of the blue boxes, our children and our youth in our schools. They have led the way when it comes to reduce, reuse and recycle. I know that the members opposite would like to see us continue to expand the program.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's a privilege to rise and comment on the member from York-Simcoe, who always has a way of putting things and a way of bringing it back to common sense. I think it's something we don't do enough of around here.

Waste recycling, being the mayor of a township, was a huge issue. If you made it tough for the residents to get their waste to the landfill, you ended up picking it up on the road, and there's far too much of that. You have to have something that's practical.

I hear the member from Scarborough-Agincourt talking about the need to reduce and the greenhouse gas. It's interesting: We have a resident with a business in my riding who has been trying to get a permit to increase the amount of greenhouse gases that he's forced to flare off and let into the atmosphere. He would like to be able to turn that into electricity. He already does some of that. I'm not sure why the applications are tied up for so long.

It seems you might say, "Well, maybe they don't need the electricity," but at the same time, they are looking at establishing another 150 windmills in the area. So what would be wrong with taking this methane gas and turning it into electricity? It would solve both issues and maybe take the pressure off the need.

It was interesting, also, the talk about amendments. I sat on a committee for Bill 135 where we had 30 or 40 amendments by both of the opposition parties, and not one was taken on by the government. Those amendments of all the deputants we saw all had the same message. It was the fact that we were putting in a new plan that has no expert oversight in this case, and this government changed the rules so they no longer have to put in place an open and transparent process. These amendments were heard numerous times through the committee, and of course they were ignored and voted down by this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I thought you were going to say "Niagara Falls," Speaker, and I was going to say, "Tell me it's not so."

Just briefly, one of the members—I think it was the minister without portfolio—talked about this bill being in front of us two years ago, and he maybe in some way insinuated that it was someone's fault that we've been waiting all these years to actually deal with waste diversion and changes to this act.

We have great research staff who actually work for all of us in all parties. I had a look at this document, and it says that the Liberal government has been talking about reforming this act for over a decade. After a five-year mandatory review in 2007, nine years ago, they released a discussion paper in 2008 that proposed zero waste. The report was called *Toward a Zero Waste Future*, and here we are still talking about that waste. I can tell you, as a former municipal politician, we've spent a lot of time at every level of government talking about waste diversion, but we don't seem to make a whole heck of a lot of progress.

The member from Leeds-Grenville, though, spoke about enforcement, and I think that piece is missing out of this legislation. We certainly have enforcement for the people that are recycling. For all of our constituents who recycle, you have to cut the cardboard up to this size and you have to make sure you wrap it in string and you have to separate the bottles and the cans from the paper. You have to do all of those kinds of things, and if you don't, they leave it there. If you put out more than one bag of garbage, they leave that there as well. So if there's enforcement for the constituents who are paying the tax bills and the waste bills, then there should also be some good enforcement for those making the waste.

1710

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from York-Simcoe for a final comment.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you to the members from London West, Scarborough-Agincourt, Stormont-



Dundas–South Glengarry and Welland—quite a range of comments that came about as a result of this, but I think I there are some messages here when we look at the accumulation of comments that were made a moment ago.

First of all, Bill 91, the bill from some time ago, provided the catalyst for what we are looking at today in Bill 151, because this is a very serious issue. There was a time not so long ago when all of what we are talking would be called “garbage,” and then it suddenly started to percolate that we needed to reuse, recycle, reduce and recover. Then, from that, we started to see garbage not as garbage but actually as a resource. So this kind of process has meant that we are where we are today in looking at managing it and how best to do it and being able to look at the economic opportunities that it provides, as well as the provision of the environment. When you have a story such as we heard from the member from Stormont-Dundas, where greenhouse gas could be contained and used, we have a long way to go. We are not at waste-free yet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It is a pleasure to join the debate today on behalf of the people I represent in London West and to add some comments to what has already been said here in this House about Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

Certainly it is heartening that we are seeing some consensus around this Legislature about the need for this legislation. We would have liked to have seen it earlier, but nevertheless, we are pleased to see it being debated here today and hopefully to see it move forward through the passage of second reading vote and into committee.

We are really moving through a moment of time when there is a real opportunity to make a difference. People are becoming aware of climate change in a way that they never had before and are committed to taking action. That extends to issues around waste diversion and resource recovery. People want to do more to reduce the packaging they use and divert products at their end of life away from landfill and into recycling plants and other places for diversion.

We know that in this province currently we are not doing very well on waste diversion. The government itself, when the bill was brought forward, admitted that only 15% of Ontario’s waste stream is diverted, and that, overall, waste diversion rates have stalled at about 25% for the last 10 years. As I mentioned earlier, in my community of London, the municipality, like municipalities across the province, in fact, has been doing an excellent job in running the municipal Blue Box Program. They’ve been doing everything they can to optimize efficiencies and really divert as much of the waste stream as they can, but still, on the residential side, we’re looking at only about 45% of residential waste being diverted in my community, which is far below the provincial target of 60%. That’s because the system that is currently in place isn’t doing anything to create incentives for businesses to

look at producing more sustainable products. The current system hasn’t done enough to stop the flow of garbage into landfills. The result is that municipalities are footing the bill.

As I said, we are pleased to see this legislation. After a decade of talking about reforming the Waste Diversion Act, it’s good to see that action is finally taking place. Some of the members in this House, I know, were here in 2008 when that discussion paper was released by the Liberal government that proposed a goal of zero waste and an extended producer responsibility framework. That was in 2008, Speaker.

The following year, in 2009, we saw a report issued by the Minister of the Environment that was entitled *From Waste to Worth: The Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy*. Again, that report recommended a system of individual producer responsibility that would make producers fully responsible to meet waste diversion requirements for waste discarded within both the residential and ICI sectors.

Five years after the release of that report, in June 2013, we saw some legislation to create this individual producer responsibility framework, and that was Bill 91, which was the Waste Reduction Act. That bill was actually being debated at the time that I arrived in this Legislature, in August 2013, after the by-election. That bill was in the midst of second reading debate. I know that it was called 16 times. On 16 different days, it came forward for second reading debate, but for some reason, it was never voted on. When the election was called in June 2014, the legislation just died on the order paper.

Speaker, it has taken eight years to get us to where we are today—eight years since the government first proposed a zero waste future and first recommended a system of individual producer responsibility.

I mentioned the failure of the current system, because it shifts the costs of waste away from producers and onto either consumers, through eco fees, or municipalities, through the Blue Box Program.

I mentioned London’s Blue Box Program. In 2010, the net cost of the program was \$10 million, but \$2 million of that was paid directly by municipal taxpayers, because that is what it costs to run the program. It’s supposed to be 50-50, but it doesn’t work that way. Municipalities end up carrying a much greater share of the costs of running the system.

Speaker, when people who are generating the waste don’t have to pay their fair share of the costs of dealing with the waste, there is no incentive to reduce, reuse or recycle. We have heard many concerns from the Ontario Waste Management Association, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, the Auditor General and others who have talked about the failure of the current system in not effectively promoting waste reduction and not incentivizing better waste diversion or moving closer to waste diversion targets.

The purpose of Bill 151 is to eliminate industry-funded organizations and the industry stewardship plans that were set up under the current Waste Diversion Act,

and to replace those with a new model for individual producer responsibility.

One of the primary concerns of the NDP caucus with this legislation is that it is enabling legislation. It includes very few details as to how this transition to individual producer responsibility will be achieved. There are no timelines about when these industry-funded organizations will be phased out and no timelines for when the new model of individual producer responsibility will be implemented. So much of this bill relies on regulations, and those regulations have not yet been written. We have no way of knowing how effective they will be, and, to some extent, that has tempered people's enthusiasm for the bill. This is a great aspirational statement about achieving a waste-free Ontario, but we really need to see some more details as to how the avowed goal of the bill will be achieved.

1720

Earlier I spoke about the first iteration of this bill, Bill 91, which was introduced in 2013. One of the most significant differences between that legislation and the current bill is around identification or recognition that there is a provincial interest and there should be provincial policy statements to move the province closer to waste diversion targets.

This is important. There's a great list of provincial interests that are set out in Bill 151, but, surprisingly, zero waste is not one of those provincial interests that are identified in the bill. Similarly, the bill requires the minister to publish a strategy as to how it is going to support the provincial interests that are identified in the bill, but nowhere is waste-free Ontario identified as one of the specific goals of the strategy.

This causes us some concern because we know that without specific targets, timelines and goals it is very difficult to achieve the vision that is outlined in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I'm pleased to respond to the member from London West. I talked about general transition the other day, and I would like to speak about the blue box transition today.

As we all know, Ontario's recycling programs have been recognized internationally. Almost all Ontarians—97% of our households—have access to the Blue Box Program. When this legislation was being developed, we heard very clearly from people from across Ontario that the transition should be smooth and orderly.

This bill would ensure that everyone, whether they live in the northern part of Ontario or the southern part of Ontario, in rural or urban areas, would have the same level of convenient access to the blue box services that they have today. It will be overseen by a new oversight body, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, which would be responsible for enforcing these service standards.

The member from London West raised an issue that there is no clear timeline. If this proposed legislation is passed, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate

Change anticipates that the transition of municipal hazardous or special waste, waste electrical, electronic equipment and used tire programs could be completed within two to four years. The transition of the Blue Box Program may take longer because it needs extensive discussion and extensive consultation among municipalities, government, producers and consumers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I thank the member for London West for her comments, but I have to agree with my colleague Lisa Thompson that one of the concerns we've heard over and over again from stakeholders is specifically the uncertainty of Bill 151. Municipalities from which I've come and from across the province must be at the table and must be partners in how we move forward.

Ontario must continue to escalate its diversion rate. Over the last number of years—in fact, years that parallel the time that the Liberals have formed a government in this province—diversion has stalled here in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. As Ms. Thompson rightly pointed out, diversion of 25% is inadequate. It's certainly inadequate.

We need a market-driven solution. The government of Ontario should set targets and standards and then get out of the way—get out of the way. It should let industry innovate and create market-driven solutions.

We all agree that packaging alone creates an enormous amount of waste. Again, my colleague Lisa Thompson summed it up best in an earlier debate: The PC plan will set targets and then let industry move to innovate. She said, "Get government out of the way. Get government out of the way and let industry be the innovators." I couldn't agree more.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was very interesting to listen to my colleague from London West, who basically put on the record some really troubling issues with the bill. It has a very cool name though, eh? Waste-Free Ontario Act, but nothing in the act talks to a waste-free Ontario, just the title. So we have a cool title that says "waste-free Ontario." This is something that people can get excited about, this is progressive, this is where we should get to, but there's nothing in the bill that talks about a waste-free Ontario.

Basically, it talks about bringing us to a system where producer responsibility will become feasible at a time yet to be determined and in a way yet to be determined. Did I say that we have a cool title? Yeah, I think I already said that, eh? But as far as the meat and potatoes of the bill, it leaves a lot to regulation. It leaves a lot to the day that we will do all of this work, go through first and second readings, committee, third reading, royal assent, and nothing will change. It will stay exactly the same as what we have now, with a hope that we have now enabled the Liberal government to actually put forward regulations that hopefully may move us somewhere yet to be defined.

**Interjection:** And sometimes they don't.



**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** And sometimes they don't. Everybody will remember that 10 years ago we passed legislation for an anti-racism secretariat. We are 10 years later and we have yet to see any movement.

I think this has a cool title, but that is pretty well where it ends.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm delighted to speak to Bill 151, which indeed has a really cool title: Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. I won't spend any of my two minutes addressing concerns or philosophical debate about whether we enshrine things in legislation or regulation. I think it's understood by most legislative bodies in the world that the world is changing so fast that regulation is the way to go.

What I wanted to do for my remaining time was just to talk about some of the economic benefits of the act, because I know, as a municipal politician myself, I've seen the costs continue to increase with regard to waste recovery, with regard to landfill. So it is nice to take a step back and look at some of the economic benefits of this act, because they are profound. If passed, the Waste-Free Ontario Act would boost the economy by recovering more resources from more waste materials, creating jobs. That's the overarching philosophy behind this.

But some stats: Over eight million tonnes of waste is sent to landfills each year. That represents about a billion dollars of recoverable material currently lost to landfills across Canada—absolutely unacceptable.

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We're told by the experts that if we recover just 60% of waste materials, that would create 13,000 jobs and contribute \$1.5 billion in gross domestic product to Ontario—nothing to be sneezed at with those stats. The proposed framework would also propel investment by the waste management industry in expanded services and recycling facilities which, right now, I think we can all agree are sorely lacking.

Thank you for the time to speak to this bill, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from London West for her final comments.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments by the members for Mississauga–Brampton South, Whitby–Oshawa, Nickel Belt and Newmarket–Aurora.

I want to start where the member for Newmarket–Aurora left off, and that is about the jobs that could potentially be created by moving forward with more effective waste diversion. It's interesting that at the same time the government has introduced its Waste-Free Ontario Act, it is also proposing a new energy-from-waste program that will require new garbage incinerators to have a guaranteed 10-year supply of burnable garbage. We have data that shows that between 85% and 90% of municipal solid waste is recyclable, is compostable, and yet the municipalities that are hosting these energy-from-waste incinerators will have to decide whether to divert that municipal solid waste or burn it.

One has to question what the government was thinking when they decided to move forward with the garbage incineration project. Not only has there been no coordination between the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and the Ministry of Energy, but I think this new garbage incineration program is going to directly contradict the stated goals of Bill 151, vague as they are.

The NDP welcomes this legislation, but we will certainly be moving a number of amendments to it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a great pleasure to be in the chamber today to discuss the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. Obviously, I want to congratulate the hard work of our critic, Lisa Thompson, the member from Huron–Bruce, who has put forward our thoughtful response to this piece of legislation.

That said, Speaker, I do have some reservations when speaking to any Liberal bill that talks about waste because, at the end of the day, the waste that I see with this government, as accountability critic for the Treasury Board, is the waste at eHealth, the waste of a billion dollars with cancelled gas plant scandals or the waste at Ornge air ambulance. That's the type of waste I think of when I see a bill entitled the Waste-Free Ontario Act. That would be a bill I could get behind, when they're eliminating waste in government.

That said, this piece of legislation is, I guess, one in a long line of other pieces of government legislation dealing with waste reduction, littering, recycling and reduction that this province has seen in the decade I have been elected to this assembly. By the way, this month, I and Mr. Tabuns, who I believe is the environment critic for the third party, celebrate 10 years in this chamber—that will be toward the end of the month.

I remember, when first being elected, that the government was going to reduce IC&I; they were going to eliminate it. Their target at the time was about 60% under Dalton McGuinty, and I don't know if they ever actually broke 30%. It's a sad state of affairs when you're in government for 13 years and you always have moving targets. It's like dangling carrots forever and ever in front of a horse, but they're elusive. The targets of this government, when it comes to reduction of waste, recycling and the like are, again, elusive. They're elusive targets. They're never met. They are targets that look good on paper, that look great as a visual when the Premier or the environment minister is speaking and they have a press conference, but they mean absolutely nothing to the people of Ontario, to the municipalities within this province. All they seem to do is get it wrong with our stakeholders.

The Waste-Free Ontario Act, the Waste Diversion Act, the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act and a number of other acts like the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Municipal Act—and a number of municipalities have their own acts—will be changed and they will allow for government policy statements to be included.

But what I would ask, as a member from the city of Ottawa who at one point had every single landfill in the city of Ottawa contained within her boundaries, and that was quite significant: In fact, we would challenge the government to stop the expansion at Carp Road. The smell in all of the city of Ottawa and the west end would be terrible. I don't represent that community of Stittsville anymore, but they need a strong champion because the entire air quality in that community goes downhill because this government was unable to reduce the amount of waste going into the landfill and encourage recycling at a sustainable rate.

I look at, for example, the waste recovery site that they want to build in a community close to mine in the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's riding. I hope, in fact, the member brings that up when he's speaking, because the residents in that community are very opposed to this resource recovery area. They are fearing it's going to turn into a landfill and not actually separate waste. I'd like that kind of debate to hit the floor of this assembly.

I come here, as I've talked about many times, from the great community of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, a town of 10,000 when I left; 9,000 it's grown to since then. But I was very proud: My father was the chair of Pictou County Solid Waste for a number of years, meaning he chaired the local dump. He was the chair of the police commission, so he was a police commissioner. He was the deputy mayor. He did a lot of things in the community on a volunteer basis. The member from Welland is nodding. Our families are actually a bit connected in that sense because of our roots from that community and the relationship my father had with her cousin. They were best friends, so I call her my cousin.

My father was somebody who was always on the forefront of bringing his community into the next century. In fact, he was the person who led the first municipality in North America to become smoke-free. He fought like that because his brother, my uncle, died at the age of 42 from cancer.

Then he took on this goal of making their community more environmentally friendly. I'm talking 10 or 15 years ago and garbage bags about this big. I'm talking about a round, ball-size bag that would be the only thing that would go out to the curb. They were so effective at reducing and reusing and recycling that you would see everything neatly out there on separate days. They would collect your garbage, but a lot of people weren't sending garbage out; they were sending recycling out. He did such a good job that they became a world leader.

I always wish, in times of debate like this, that my dad was still around. He died just seven days before my second election, when I was 32. But there are days like this where I wish I could call him up and say, "Dad, we've got this great piece of legislation in front of us," or a bad piece of legislation in front of us, "and I'd like your opinion on it."

I think about earlier today—and I'm going to go off topic, Speaker, but I'll quickly get back on—when we talked about PTSD in this assembly, and his time with

the police commission. He was the president of the Canadian Association of Police Boards. He would have wanted me to talk about that bill, and I'm happy that I had at least two minutes to talk about PTSD and our front-line responders. Again, I'm a bit off topic, being a bit nostalgic here talking about my father. But it talks about a record and a legacy that he had and one I wish that this government could actually emulate on waste reduction and waste diversion.

When I think about some of the initiatives that they have put forward where there has been a tremendous amount of not garbage waste but a tremendous amount of resource waste in terms of money, that concerns me. We have seen, for example, with this government, an eco tax that came in without anybody knowing it was going to come in. On July 2, 2010, I believe, it came out. We weren't expecting it, and there it was. Ontario consumers had to pay for it, but it really wasn't going into anything to do with environmental sustainability, which kind of reminds me of what we see now as a new tax being brought in by this government on our gasoline with respect to the carbon tax.

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We've seen changes to bottle exchanges, for example, to reuse our bottles. We had issues with that back when I was first elected. John Tory was very concerned with how that bottle resource recovery was going to take place. You look at other provinces, for example. They have different models and, sometimes, I think it would behoove us to look at what's working in the private sector elsewhere, and we could do that.

To this bill in particular, I think that, obviously, it's something that our party, the Progressive Conservative caucus, can support, but we do have to advance some changes and we do have to champion those stakeholders who feel like they have been left behind. We have long championed an increase to recycling and reduction of waste through innovation and competition among businesses in the private sector, and that's what I just talked about when it comes to bottle recycling. There are opportunities there that may actually be very lucrative for our communities.

Under our plan, as Progressive Conservatives, we would set measurable and achievable recycling targets for business, establish environmental standards and enforce the rules. Speaker, if the target was over 60% reduction when Dalton McGuinty took office 13 years ago, why have we not even met that today? We've stalled. We've stalled at 25%. If we've stalled at 25%, it means the government isn't doing enough with those targets, it's not doing enough to enforce their rules, or their rules are unworkable.

Our plan in the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus is also to understand that businesses can advance innovation and improve efficiency more effectively than government ever could. We had a group—maybe I shouldn't bring them out onto the floor of the assembly—called Plasco. They were trying to use plasma gasification in order to effectively boil garbage and turn it into gas. It never really worked. The company has, I believe,



filed for bankruptcy, but it was in my community. What they were doing was trying to take waste and put it onto the grid. That was an innovative experiment. It may not necessarily have worked, but maybe the next group that tries this initiative will.

In essence, we do support this bill. We do want some changes to it, and we want to see further elements of our plans to be included in Bill 51, but we are pleased with some that are there. In essence, we remain opposed to all instances of unnecessary regulation, bureaucracy and government intervention, but we do encourage this government to set reasonable targets that they believe they can achieve—not like their budgetary stretch goals; not aspirational goals; real ones.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to be able to add my comments to the thoughtful remarks from the member from Nepean–Carleton on the bill before us, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, which I will remind the House is an enabling piece of legislation.

To the member's point about moving targets: I think she had said that they were elusive and never met, but that they looked good on paper. It's very interesting to think about targets with this government, because sometimes they're moving targets and sometimes they just aren't there at all. I think that that's disappointing for Ontarians, because if you don't have a goal, how will you know when you've achieved it? If you don't have clear targets, how will we know when we have met them? So I don't think we should be afraid to be clear about where we're headed.

We talk about a waste-free Ontario, and that's quite a vision. But if you can imagine a government-waste-free Ontario, to the member's point about scandals—imagine a true government-waste-free Ontario. If we think about Ornge and eHealth and the gas plants money, imagine that we could have made such a great difference and not just made great headlines. When we think about education and health care, and imagine how much stronger they would be were we not so laden down with government waste, it would be a very different kind of waste-free Ontario.

Again to the member from Nepean–Carleton: I appreciated hearing her talk about her father and her journey to this place. I think it's always interesting for us as members to appreciate where others have come from. I think it's a reminder that we are here on behalf of those who are going somewhere and other people's children. When we're talking about a waste-free Ontario and the kind of future we want to hand to our children, we should have real targets. We should have a clear vision for them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments? The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I like how you say that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to stand this afternoon and respond to some of the comments from the member from Nepean–Carleton on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

As a former municipal councillor where so much of our time was spent on trying to find strategies to achieve the goals that both the province set and our municipality set for itself for waste diversion, I welcome this act and the changes it brings about.

It brings about some key changes in terms of ensuring that there are ongoing reviews of the strategies that are implemented, whether the targets are being met and giving that flexibility to alter course when something is working or not working.

As a consumer, I'm also quite happy to see the elimination of the eco fees, changing that system. Certainly, going into a store, purchasing a television or a computer monitor, you saw that fee there and you really, as a consumer, wondered where the money goes. As a city councillor, I understood the mechanism by which some of that money ended up being transferred to my municipality to help assist with waste diversion, but it wasn't clear in consumers' minds. So that is also a welcome part of it.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to put more onus on producers to deal with their products. I can tell you of a recent success story in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, where an organization called Brands For Canada actually secured an agreement with a major clothing manufacturer that previously took new product and sent it to landfill, rather than have their brand show up at discounts in stores. Now this charitable organization redistributes this brand-new brand clothing to Syrian refugees and others in need of good clothing. This is an excellent example of a manufacturer taking responsibility for what otherwise would be waste. This act will support more activities like that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to offer comments and reflections upon the debate that was added to Hansard by our member from Nepean–Carleton. First of all, I congratulate her for taking a moment to reflect on the legacy that her father has left not only in her home community but clearly with her as well, striving to reduce waste and come forward with good, thoughtful policy. It's always wonderful to hear how members of family have impacted our members who are here today. So, thank you very much for doing that.

The other thing that I reflected upon when she was speaking was her focus on the "waste-free" title of this particular bill and how ironic it actually happens to be, because we're not getting rid of wasteful bureaucracy, and the member from Nepean–Carleton pointed it out very well. Just to go back and revisit that: We have too much red tape, and we have programs—in this particular case, eco programs—that have not improved the status of reducing, recycling and reusing. We need to move on to recovery, but that's a discussion for another day. We have a layer of bureaucracy that has handcuffed and stalled the diversion rate at a dismal 25% here in Ontario over the last decade, or the reign of this current Liberal government.

With that said, we need to think about how we can get better. We'll get better if we we're actually strong

enough to stand up and recognize mistakes—I'm speaking on behalf of the government—and totally get rid of WDO, instead of sliding it into this new authority that is going to be hand-chosen. Again, Speaker, we have a concern here about the new authority. In the manner in which the bill is written up, five members will be selected by the minister and they in turn will select another six. It's very dangerous territory.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions and comments?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It is always a pleasure to stand in this House and bring the voice of my constituents of Windsor West to the debate. Today, we are debating Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015.

When my colleague from Oshawa got up to add comment to what the member from Nepean–Carleton had spoken to, she had helped summarize what the member from Nepean–Carleton was talking about, which was Liberal waste, government waste and the scandals and the misspending. She talked about how that affects our education system. We have seen funding cuts to the education system, and those cuts affect some of the great learning opportunities for our students, such as recycling programs. Many schools have top-notch recycling programs. Many of them are going for the designation of eco schools, which is a big designation. It's a real honour for students to receive that designation on behalf of their school.

In this bill, there's no guarantee that municipal blue box costs will go down. The provincial government has already downloaded too many costs onto municipalities. This bill might add more burdens to municipalities.

When we're talking about school boards, where their budgets are already stretched, and we want our future generations to be actively involved in and enthusiastic about things like recycling and waste reduction, we need to make sure that there aren't any unnecessary costs downloaded onto them and onto the city councils in our various areas. We need to make sure that they have the resources they need in order for our students to learn that they need to take great steps forward in reducing waste going into landfill. These are our future leaders, and we need to make sure that they have all the supports in place to support great programs like the Blue Box Program.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Now back to the member from Nepean–Carleton for her final comments.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'd like to start off by saying thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for his contribution in the debate.

To my colleagues from Windsor West, Oshawa and Huron–Bruce, I'd like to say a special thank you to the three of you. Not only did you acknowledge my father and how important he was to me, and his contributions to waste management, but what I really liked about your speeches was that you actually talked about the future.

I had a question today in question period about the next generation. We may not agree, in our two parties,

about how to get there, but at least we're talking about it. We're talking about the legacy we're going to leave the next generation, and how important it is, for example, that the resources we have today are handed down to them in a sustainable way, whether that is the budget and how it pertains to education, or whether that is our environment and how we make sure it's clean. You all spoke about that, and I really appreciated it.

This will be my somewhat plug for women in politics. It's always interesting, as we go—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Of course, my colleague beside me—your riding is the longest, so I'm saying your name; I know that's not the rule—Randy Hillier, has been I think one of the biggest champions for females in this assembly, especially with his fight against domestic abuse in rural Ontario, where it is most prevalent.

It was meant as no slight, but next year, we celebrate 100 years of women having the right to vote in Ontario. I think that's a significant thing, and I think it behooves us to mention that all the way.

I see my friend from Niagara Falls pointing, and he wants to be known as the man who's sitting between two women. We call him Wayne, the ladies' man.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was a real pleasure to be part of this debate. I always enjoy my Tuesdays. I know that I'm so far out of order, Speaker, that even the Clerk wants me to sit down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I appreciate the fact that the member from Nepean–Carleton finally decided to address the Chair in her comments. Thank you so very much for that.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Since it is now close to 6 o'clock, pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the Premier or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Having said that, I turn it over now to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. Last week, I questioned the Premier on domestic violence, and women and their families living in fear in rural Ontario. We're here tonight because of the Premier's failure to address this crisis and this question. I had thought that this would be of such significant interest to the Premier that not just the parliamentary assistant would be here to respond.



However, in the Premier's response to me, she stated, "But I will not"—and I emphasize "will not"—"take lessons from this member on how to invest in and how to support the women of this province."

She also stated that it is in the DNA of her government to put protections in place for vulnerable people.

Speaker, let's take a look at how that's going, their protection of women and children living in fear.

A one-day snapshot survey found 3,459 residents in Ontario shelters that offer services to abused women. Some 54% of these residents were women, and 46% were dependent children of those women.

In 2010, there were almost 31,000 admissions of women and children to the shelters in Ontario that provided services for abused women.

Every six days in this country, a woman is killed by her intimate partner—one every six days.

Some 41% of abused women in shelters in Ontario stated that their most recent abusive situation had been brought to the attention of the police, but of these cases, in only 61% were charges laid.

In 2010, the rate of intimate partner homicide committed against females increased by 19%, the third increase in four years.

Every year, over 40,000 arrests result from domestic violence. That's 12% of all violent crime.

Some 53% of women escaping abusive situations were admitted with their children, and 65% of those children were under the age of 10.

Speaker, is this what the Premier meant by saying it's in her DNA to protect women and vulnerable people?

The Premier responded to me that she would not take lessons from me. She emphasized she would "not take lessons" from me.

Speaker, I've sat down many times with the executive director of the interval house in my riding. We've worked together and we've come up with a number of recommendations on how to address these failings. Let me read off some of these recommendations.

(1) Statements given by victims that are to be used for court processes should be reviewed, clarified and discussed so that victims are in a more confident position.

(2) If a court is double-booked or overbooked, it is critical that the victims be engaged before an alternate decision is made. The conditional discharge that often happens frees up court space, but it demonstrates no consideration for the victims.

(3) There must be an increased opportunity for police services and victims to influence the outcomes, based on the risk assessment and their knowledge of the accused, especially given rural realities and complexities.

(4) There should be a greater understanding for victims and offenders related to conditions. Will there be active monitoring, passive monitoring or no monitoring at all? There should be non-negotiable conditions for which a breach will result in arrest or re-arrest.

(5) Sentencing and outcomes must better reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Speaker, those are a few of the recommendations from the Lanark County Interval House. I know the Premier won't take lessons from me. Will she take lessons from the Lanark County Interval House even when I'm the messenger?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. The parliamentary assistant may have up to five minutes for a reply.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm, first of all, pleased to be able to speak in this special session and, as well, salute many of my colleagues on this side, including Minister MacCharles, Minister Jaczek, the MPPs for Cambridge, Burlington, Scarborough-Agincourt and Barrie and others who are here lending support.

Monsieur le Président, merci pour l'opportunité de discuter de cet enjeu important. Notre gouvernement reconnaît que la misogynie ancrée dans notre culture requiert que nous agissions. Nous devons changer la façon dont les gens sont sensibilisés face à cet enjeu. C'est un enjeu qui requiert que nous nous élevions au-delà du débat partisan.

It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that we elevate the dialogue around this issue, particularly as we are facing more and more challenges with regard to violence against women.

As the member opposite knows, the issue of violence against women is something that our government takes extremely seriously, and we are taking action.

C'est pour cela que notre gouvernement mène les efforts pour prévenir la violence basée sur le sexe de la personne. Pour s'assurer que toutes les femmes en Ontario vivent libres de menaces—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Deputy House leader, come to order.

**M. Shafiq Qaadri:** —et de la peur de subir de la violence, nous avons lancé notre plan d'action. Ce n'est jamais acceptable, et nous investissons 41 millions de dollars au cours des trois prochaines années.

We have launched, for example, an advertising campaign that has tangibly improved attitudes and has been viewed over 84 million times. We've introduced legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing and through the civil claims process. We've increased funding for 42 sexual assault centres by approximately \$1.75 million; and for hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres by \$1.1 million.

Speaker, as you and Ontarians and my colleagues will appreciate, our 2016 budget will also invest \$100 million—I repeat, \$100 million over three years in our long-term strategy to end violence against indigenous women.

Our government is also taking real steps to address human trafficking by working with community groups that are already on the ground working hard to combat this issue. Building on the work of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we are bringing

together a multi-ministerial advisory panel, co-headed by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the minister responsible for women's issues. They will work closely with the experts on the front lines to bring forward a strategy that will benefit and deal with this particular area.

Monsieur le Président, enfin, comme je l'ai déjà dit, notre gouvernement considère la violence envers les femmes comme un problème extrêmement sérieux, et nous continuerons d'agir sur cet enjeu important.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank both members.

### GO TRANSIT

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member for Kitchener-Conestoga has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Transportation. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

We now turn it over to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Speaker. I asked for this late show debate due to my complete dissatisfaction with the response I received relating to questions to the Premier on her all-day, two-way promises for GO service to and from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Specifically, I was seeking clarity as to why the people of Kitchener should believe the Premier's often repeated promise on all-day, two-way GO when there was a complete lack of timelines and details in the 2016 budget.

As well, I asked for further clarity as to the post-budget remarks made by the member for Kitchener Centre, indicating to CTV's Abigail Bimman that there will be a very substantial announcement on all-day, two-way GO before the summer.

Again the question was, Mr. Speaker, what was so substantial about this supposed announcement that it didn't make its way into the budget?

Not only did the minister make no attempt whatsoever to answer my direct questions, he chose to muddy the waters even further by referencing (1) transit initiatives across the province when we in Kitchener continue to wait, (2) my voting record against tax-and-spend Liberal budgets and (3) our own leader's record.

First, I would ask the minister not to keep heaping insult on top of injury by continuing to remind us in Kitchener of the fact that while his government continues to invest in transportation needs in other parts of the province, we remain waiting in line, receiving empty words after empty promises that move us no closer to all-day, two-way GO enhancements that our commuters require.

Second, I don't vote for Liberal debt and deficit budgets that jack up taxes and wasteful spending and completely fail to deliver on services that we've been promised for years. Get back to me when you have a

budget that doesn't continue the woeful and wasteful trend of the last decade.

Third, we should be thankful for our leader's record in working as part of a previous Harper federal government to control spending and balance budgets to ensure there's more to invest in the vital priorities we all share, like health care and, yes, infrastructure among them. Just like our major infrastructure announcement in Kitchener-Waterloo, the LRT: The federal government fulfilled the promise of one-third commitment. Of course, the Liberals—a two-thirds promise—"Oh, but we're going to pull a third, sticking it to local taxpayers."

But look, I've got to get back to the background that brought us here today and the questions that I'd voiced earlier this morning. Speaker, it has now been close to two years since the Premier came down to Kitchener to make a pre-election promise, re-announcing the addition of Kitchener GO train service after having cancelled it in 2010 and committing to all-day, two-way GO. A few months later, she formed government, and she stated that more trains would be added immediately, adding that the full two-way service will take a couple of years.

Her then-Minister of Transportation, now the Minister of the Environment, doubled down on that commitment, but in the true spirit of Liberal stretch promises, stretched the timeline to five years.

Since that time, we've seen the Wynne Liberals make countless visits down to our area, speaking to the importance of talks and discussions, even as the transport minister admitted to me in committee that there are a lot of announcements and commitments that governments and MPPs make during elections that are aspirational in nature. That's a stretch in every sense of the word.

Then in November, we learned what a stretch it was when the member for Kitchener Centre reported that all-day, two-way GO was not five but actually more like 10 years away, accompanied by a sob story about federal jurisdictional hurdles in their way, as if they weren't aware of those issues when they first made their commitments to garner votes. Then, instead of the enhanced services that we were promised, we were hit with the highest fare hike in the province for the inadequate service they've left us with. It's the old pay more, get less, Speaker.

And so it goes on. While we in Kitchener continue to wonder if the trains will ever pull into the station, we see other areas receive their regional express rail expansions as we continue to wait, which brings us back to the 2016 budget, a budget that the Kitchener Centre MPP told reporters knocked her socks off due to the series of mentions of Kitchener-Waterloo in the text.

Well, as I indicated this morning, talk is cheap, and I would advise the member to keep her socks on because empty words aren't bringing the trains to Kitchener any faster. The budget does absolutely nothing to move us closer to the delivery of this vital transit upgrade we were promised years ago. You would think that after two years, they would have gotten around to an agreement with freight partners that the budget says is key to



delivering all-day, two-way. It's one thing to make promises, but a budget document is where a government spells out detailed plans and timelines. I thought that we would have seen more than discussions and hoped-for agreements that continue to leave us at the curb.

Today's lack of clear response leaves me believing that it's more the latter: all talk, no action.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation has up to five minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address the member's question.

As the minister has said on many occasions in this House, we know how important public transit is to managing congestion, connecting people to jobs and building communities. That is why our government is making the single largest transit and transportation infrastructure investment in Ontario's history through the Moving Ontario Forward plan.

This is a plan that will invest \$13.5 billion in improvements across the GO Transit network to both increase ridership and reduce travel times. Over the next 10 years, commuters can expect more than a doubling of peak service and a quadrupling of off-peak service, compared to today. Weekly trips across the entire GO rail network are expected to grow from close to 1,500 trips to nearly 6,000 trips.

Speaker, as a representative of the Waterloo region, as well as the parliamentary assistant, I would be remiss if I didn't take a minute to stress the importance of the government's plan to deliver on GO regional express rail, especially and particularly on our promise to deliver two-way, all-day GO service to the Waterloo region.

We're already delivering on this commitment. In 2014, we acquired 53 kilometres of track between Kitchener and Georgetown because we know that ownership of the railway corridor gives the GO trains traffic priority and supports our ongoing expansion and improvement plans.

This past August, Minister Del Duca announced that we would be adding 14 additional midday, off-peak trains on the Kitchener corridor from Mount Pleasant station to Union Station. We will continue to find ways to work with CN, who owns a portion of the Kitchener line, to meet our two-way, all-day commitment.

The member from Kitchener-Conestoga, who at every opportunity has voted against budgets that support growth in his community, is fond of believing that major infrastructure projects can be built in the blink of an eye. But we continue to deliver on a promise that we have always said would take a certain period of time.

What I find most ironic, however, Speaker, is that the member opposite continues to criticize our government—a government which has a bold and ambitious plan—instead of asking his own leader a few fundamental questions.

Time and again, the opposition neglects to tell Ontarians exactly how they intend to fund transportation infrastructure. This leads me to believe that they're also neglecting to tell Ontarians exactly which projects they would be so willing to cancel, if they had the chance.

Instead of criticizing a bold plan that will transform his community, the member from Kitchener-Conestoga should be asking his leader, "What is your plan?" Because day after day and debate after debate, in questions asked during question period, what the opposition continues to do, time and again, is to make it abundantly clear they have no plan.

Speaker, our government believes in a strong plan to build Ontario up. We will continue to deliver tangible results to the communities across this province, including the communities in Waterloo region.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1813.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jacek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones



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Soo Wong  
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Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
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Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker  
Jeff Yurek  
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la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh  
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe  
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
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of Ontario**

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**Wednesday 2 March 2016**

**Mercredi 2 mars 2016**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 March 2016

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 mars 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.  
*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Speaker, I'm pleased today to lend my voice to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. We need to focus today on a credible plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change, as we all know, is a serious challenge that we all want to address. That's why Ontarians across the province are already taking individual action to reduce their carbon footprint. Speaker, many have made their homes more energy efficient already, some have purchased hybrid cars, and others have invested in new, clean technologies that will transition Ontario into a low-carbon economy.

Clearly, the people of Ontario are willing to do their part, but unfortunately the Liberals are using this goodwill to introduce cap-and-trade. Again, Speaker, I want to emphasize that I do not think it's acceptable that Liberals are using Ontarians' goodwill, and use the environment as an excuse, to introduce their cash grab cap-and-trade. It has proven to be an ineffective tool to reduce emissions, and we've seen that in Europe already. The fact of the matter is that it greatly increases costs for families and businesses. When we already have driven out many manufacturers to our neighbouring states, this is a huge concern that must be addressed.

Specifically, we know that cap-and-trade will increase the cost of gas, groceries and home heating for families. It will put good, well-paying jobs at risk in our manufacturing sector, and it will shut out investment in new industries and facilities in our province.

We have met with many stakeholders, and they have told us they have been waiting for a cue from Ontario one way or the other, which will be the tipping point for whether they choose to invest in Ontario or run away from Ontario. I'm afraid the latter is probably what's going to be happening.

As I said before, Speaker, the Liberals' cap-and-trade scheme is a cash grab in the name of the environment, plain and simple. It puts a new tax on gasoline and home heating to raise revenue for the government, not to protect the environment. Again, the tax on gas and the increase in home heating is solely to raise revenue for the government to use at its will. It has absolutely nothing to do with protecting the environment.

Speaker, you don't have to take my word for it. I can back my words up with those of someone else. Just listen to what former finance minister Greg Sorbara had to say recently on The Agenda with Steve Paikin last week. Sorbara said that once the government sells its "imaginary product called carbon credits," it will raise prices for "virtually every product" that Ontarians buy. I'm going to repeat that: Greg Sorbara said that once the government sells its "imaginary product called carbon credits," prices for "virtually every product" in Ontario will increase.

He wasn't afraid to tell it the way it is. Sorbara said, "Although the minister said there are no tax increases, the fact is that there's a \$1.9-billion increase—I call it a flow-through tax—that will ultimately affect consumers.... It's interesting to raise money and say, at the same time, you're not raising taxes." Speaker, it's high time this government is honest and tells the truth to Ontarians.

I always find it interesting when a Liberal is willing to point out the spin of his former colleagues.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I could quote a few Conservatives.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** The facts are—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Let's start off this morning with—

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Good morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Good morning.

I'd like to see less talk across the floor and more through the Speaker. If you have a point of order that's in order—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I sincerely apologize.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thanks.

Let's start off on a good foot today. I don't want to have to go that way. Thanks.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Just yesterday, my colleague from York-Simcoe, when debating Bill 151, the Waste-

Free Ontario Act, said that a good way to start cutting down on waste is limiting the amount of bureaucracy this government has grown.

Coming back to this particular situation in Bill 172, the facts are that the Liberals' cap-and-trade scheme puts a new tax on gasoline and home heating, which will ultimately create excessive new bureaucracy. In fact, Mr. Sorbara highlighted this very concern last week when he said, "Cap-and-trade requires a very significant bureaucracy. And this government has a very large bureaucracy. The last thing it needs is to add hundreds of people to the offices around Queen's Park to deal with cap-and-trade." Speaker, you won't be surprised when I say that I couldn't agree more with that statement. You and I both know that we need to limit the size of government, not increase it.

Worst of all, cap-and-trade has proven to be an ineffective tool to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Again, Sorbara called his own party out for moving forward with cap-and-trade, saying, "There's no evidence, anywhere in the world, that the cap-and-trade system actually does work ... to significantly reduce carbon emissions." Again, Mr. Sorbara said, "There's no evidence, anywhere in the world, that the cap-and-trade system actually does work ... to ... reduce carbon emissions. Until I see that evidence, I have to be a little bit skeptical about the whole scheme." That's right: Mr. Sorbara called the Liberal cap-and-trade initiative a scheme. He also went on to say that it's going to bring more money to the government to use as it will.

It's absolutely stunning that senior members of the Liberal Party don't even agree with the direction this government is taking. This policy direction is truly a major disappointment, and it is going to be a very sad legacy for Premier Wynne and her cabinet. Four years away from Ontario's 2020 emissions target, this government had a chance. They had a chance to introduce a credible plan to tackle climate change. But the Liberals have chosen to do the opposite, protecting their own pockets and cash flow.

Unlike British Columbia, the government's cap-and-trade scheme lacks accountability and creates a new slush fund that can be used to finance Liberal pet projects. Just think: If they had reined in their mismanagement, reined in their scandals and reined in their waste, we wouldn't have to be in this position. We could have had a well-thought-out, credible approach to addressing climate change.

The manner in which this government is acting is flat-out wrong. To raise money in the name of the environment is unacceptable. What is even more unacceptable is to use the money raised in the name of the environment for covering their butts to pay for years of Liberal scandal, waste and mismanagement, as I've mentioned before. With this government's track record, we know we cannot trust the Liberals to prioritize the environment over their spending addiction.

0910

Ontarians expect and deserve a government that will take climate change seriously, and they deserve a govern-

ment that will take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. I will cover the problems with the Liberal scheme in greater detail in my speech, but let's talk about consumers right now. I would like to go over the costs this plan will create.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Are we all done now? Good. Quiet: That's good. Continue.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I would like to go over the costs this plan will create for consumers and businesses. In reading the government's budget document, it's clear that the Liberals have not provided a fair picture of the long-term costs of their cap-and-trade scheme. Last week, I was telling people: You have to focus on the long term. When the Premier spoke about minimal charges, the reality is that that was for the first year or two. It's unacceptable to mislead Ontarians in that manner.

Since 2003, the cost of electricity has gone up 375%, and now we have 570,000 households living in energy poverty in this province. Apparently, that is still not enough, because cap-and-trade will raise the cost of the natural gas component of our power supply, and that will be reflected in our hydro bills. If you heat your home with natural gas, those bills will also increase. By 2025, some analysts project gasoline costs will increase by \$400 a year and natural gas costs will increase by \$475 annually. Think about those families. Think about the families who want to send their kids to camp or register them for hockey or for dance. That money means a lot. I dare say, I worry a lot about our seniors on fixed incomes. How are they going to manage this increase? The total bill amount of household energy bills, including electricity, gasoline and natural gas, could increase by as much as \$1,500 a year, in addition to the existing scheduled increase for electricity.

The impact on businesses is even more alarming. For a medium-sized business, analysts are projecting increases in natural gas and electricity costs ranging from \$120,000 to \$1 million. With those excessive new costs, businesses will be forced to lay off workers; and with every lost job, there's a family who has lost their livelihood. That's what this is boiling down to. How many more Ontario households will be driven into energy poverty by these increases? Many businesses will not be able to absorb that level of increase for energy. To survive, they will have to pass those costs on to consumers, resulting in an escalating decline in our standard of living. It is clear that the Liberals have not thought about this scheme's long-term impact on energy costs. They haven't even thought about the impact on our industry. They haven't thought about its effect on our border economy and our competitiveness within the North American marketplace.

The only thing the Liberals care about is the revenue the scheme will generate. And it will generate a lot. The Liberals plan to rake in \$1.9 billion a year in new money. Yes, you heard that correctly. They plan to raise \$1.9 billion, which they then can spend on whatever they choose. We know the Liberals' motive behind cap-and-trade is all about the money, no matter what they say.



But there is also a secondary Liberal motive, and that's public relations. Now, let's talk about the Liberal PR stunt for a moment. The government rushed to table Bill 172 and panicked to release its cap-and-trade regulation, all so that Kathleen Wynne and Glen Murray could pat themselves on the back at the photo op this week in Vancouver. The Liberals disregarded the concerns and economic advice of industry just so they could have their cap-and-trade scheme released in time for the First Ministers' meeting.

Ontario PCs focus on environmental results, and in focusing on environmental results, we will keep life affordable for families and businesses. Unfortunately, the Liberals' focus is taking more money from Ontarians and setting up PR stunts to garner media attention. We all have seen recently how media stunts can go awry. Do these sound like priorities of a government that is serious about addressing climate change and protecting our economy?

I think that members participating in this debate know my opinion. If the Liberals were serious about climate change, they would be focused on measures that can produce results, not setting up a stock market for carbon.

Let's talk about what really matters here. In the spirit of protecting the environment, we must look at innovation. To effectively reduce emissions, the PC Party of Ontario understands that we must advance innovation, increase energy efficiency and improve energy conservation. That means investing in transit, modernizing buildings and working with industry to develop realistic improvements to production processes. Unlike cap-and-trade, these are all proven ways to substantially reduce emissions. There are jurisdictions around the world that are doing amazing things in terms of developing environmentally friendly urban plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but I'll get to that in a moment.

With the PC Party of Ontario, technological advancement has always been our party's approach. For one, I would like to remind members opposite that it was the former PC government that started the phase-out of coal in Ontario. I've spoken about it many times. Elizabeth Witmer, a Huron county native, started that ball rolling.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I don't know if the member from Newmarket–Aurora is talking to his phone. I hear a constant mumble coming from him. If you could keep it down, I'd appreciate it.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'll dial it down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Our focus on advancing innovation underpinned our efforts. Speaker, let's be clear: Without our leadership on the phase-out of coal, the Liberals would have failed to take any action in this area. In fact, one of the reasons that the Liberals chose to follow our strong leadership on the environment is because the Harper government gave them nearly \$600 million.

*Laughter.*

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Yes, Speaker, you heard it right. They may laugh about it, but we actually will never

step away from that. I know that members opposite don't like to acknowledge these facts—just listen to them right now—because they begin to expose the very thin veneer of celebrated Liberal myths. But let's be clear for the record: The Liberals continued the coal phase-out that the former PC government started because of the \$600-million investment from the Harper government. When I reflect on this history, I think of the famous quote by John Adams: "Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

The important point is that the Ontario PCs have always understood that it is the government's responsibility to have a credible plan to reduce emissions while protecting taxpayers. And, unlike the Liberals, our focus is on advancing innovation, increasing efficiency and conserving energy, not raising energy costs and taxes for hard-working Ontarians.

I mentioned the opportunity to attend the climate summit in Paris. When I walked around the pavilions where jurisdictions from around the world were showcasing their approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, something was evident. It popped out, and I couldn't let go of it: Ontario—this Premier—likes to pretend that they're leading the way, and unfortunately we are so far behind. The event showcased tech innovations that are on the markets today or should be invested in that make a greater contribution to cutting emissions than cap-and-trade will.

The failure of government to take questions at the press conference when the MOU was signed with Manitoba was actually a sad day—for me, anyway. It's interesting that the three provinces—Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec—hosted a media event where they were going to celebrate the signing of the MOU. As quickly as they came on the stage, they were escorted off without any questions. I would dare say that one of the reasons is that when I was visiting with colleagues and visiting with other jurisdictions—other countries—they were asking, "Why is Ontario following through and going with a cap-and-trade scheme? Don't you know how it has resulted in Europe?"

**0920**

Speaker, in case you don't know, the European cap-and-trade system was absolutely polluted with fraud. The targets were mis-set and it was an absolute failure. It raised a flag, and many people that I spoke to were shaking their heads as to why Ontario would follow through and not learn from their mistakes. So the discussions, as I said, were quite interesting in Paris.

I think we need to focus in on what really matters. Again, that comes back to being fair to Ontario taxpayers and Ontario businesses, all the while focusing on the innovation and the technology we need, and a sincere commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Let's talk about the trading scheme again. I think it's worthwhile to talk about some of the problems that actually exist within cap-and-trade markets, as I alluded to just moments ago.

Many of you will remember the Chicago Climate Exchange, which traded greenhouse gas emission allowances from 2003 to 2010. By 2008, the Chicago Climate Exchange was trading 10 million tonnes of carbon allowances monthly, and the price of offsets rose to \$7.40. However, a year later, due to a lack of activity in US carbon markets, the price of a metric tonne of carbon fell from over \$7 down to 10 cents. The exchange was closed in 2010.

The other cap-and-trade system that has experienced a litany of problems, as I alluded to, is Europe's emissions trading system. Shortly after the ETS started up in 2005, problems with permits led to a collapse in prices, which resulted in a drop in value to close to zero. Disturbingly, some of these industries and manufacturers, which had received free allowances from the government, raised the price of their products as though they had actually incurred costs. The government ended up distributing so many free permits that the price of carbon dropped again, making it cheaper for companies to purchase offsets than to make emission reductions.

A significant source of instability in the ETS has been fraud. A recent audit of that system revealed that attempts to prevent fraudulent activity in the market are still inadequate. Critics suggest that the ETS has been a costly exercise which has done little to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The price of permits has dropped from €30 to less than €5 due to permits that were given for activities that did not really reduce emissions, security breaches and phony credits. Interpol has even charged a major financial institution with involvement in carbon permit fraud, and investigators estimate that billions of euros have been lost due to this activity.

Speaker, given the Liberals' history of waste and mismanagement, how can we trust them to operate such a complex initiative? I'll let you ponder that for a second, as I wet my whistle here.

We've seen time and again that they take from Peter to give to Paul. They introduce a tax in the name of health, and where did that money go? Directly into coffers. We have proof and so many reasons why we can't trust this government.

Let's talk about Liberal targets as well. Speaker, it might be helpful to review the position of Canada and Ontario with regard to greenhouse gas emissions.

Approximately 80% of greenhouse gas emissions from human sources comes from the burning of fossil fuels and various industrial processes, like driving vehicles, electricity production, heating and cooling of buildings, and transportation of goods. While global emissions have been growing, the bulk of that growth has been in emerging markets and developing nations. Canada produces 1.6% of global emissions. Due to increasing emissions levels from these developing countries, Canada's percentage share of global emissions is expected to decline.

Again, to the members opposite: I ask you to really listen here. Canada produces 1.6% of global emissions, and because of what has already happened and because other countries have greater targets to achieve, Canada's

percentage of shared global emissions is expected to decline.

Realistically, we live in a large country, often with long driving distances between cities and without a great deal of public transport outside of major urban areas.

I can't help but reflect back on last Thursday and some of the media coverage that the budget received. Specifically, Global News did a good job of challenging the finance minister on his thoughts. It's quite interesting when a finance minister, a senior cabinet minister, so clearly has a disconnect with the rest of Ontario, when he would submit to the reporter, Alan Carter, that life is going to be easier because of cap-and-trade, because we're going to encourage people to use public transit. We're going to get people off the roads. Realistically—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Naive.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Naive, or just totally wrong, because outside of the GTHA, north of Highway 7, how many of us have communities that have the opportunity to utilize public transit?

Then let's talk about heating homes. We need to heat our homes six to seven months of the year, and in the summer, we use air conditioning. Driving, heating and cooling are the necessities of life.

Ontario produces 23.5% of Canada's total emissions. Now, let's not forget that Canada's total share of global emissions is only 1.6%, and Ontario produces 23.5% of that small percentage. So what does that mean? It means that Ontario's global share of greenhouse gas emissions is about 0.38%. That's right, Speaker—less than half a percentage point, and look at what it's going to cost Ontarians and Ontario businesses. This government is just rubbing its hands, waiting eagerly to rake in the \$1.9 billion, because we have 0.38% of greenhouse gas emissions at the global level. Considering that Ontario's economy has always had a strong manufacturing and industrial sector and that we live in a climate which requires energy-intensive heating and cooling, I feel that it's important to keep that 0.38% figure in mind.

Going through the Liberal government's climate change strategy, which outlined the government's vision and objectives with regard to mitigating climate change, I gave a great deal of thought to the emission reduction targets of 37% below 1990 levels by 2030, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. The question in my mind is this: Are these realistic goals, and what would be the cost, both economic and social, to achieve them?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Stretch goals.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Yes. Are they realistic, or are they just stretch goals, as my colleague from Peel-Dufferin suggested?

Mr. Speaker, there is a great danger in setting arbitrary goals when dealing with energy and economic matters, because energy is the lifeblood of an economy. A reliable, affordable and sufficient supply of energy is inextricably linked with economic sustainability. Industry, manufacturers and businesses provide employment which in turn supports our hospitals, schools, health care system and social agencies. We must be clear here: It would take



a technological transformation of our society to reach the Liberal goals. That means our focus must be on innovation and not the cash grab that they have introduced through their cap-and-trade scheme. Without realistic and affordable developments to change how we heat and cool our homes and power our vehicles, given current technology, achieving these targets would literally bring our economy to a standstill, or require a massive wealth transfer to purchase carbon allowances from outside of our province, or perhaps a combination of both of those two scenarios.

Ontarians are rightly questioning whether the proposed cap-and-trade scheme is the most effective method of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and if it is a responsible use of scarce taxpayer dollars. Yes, I'm sure you would agree, Speaker, that tax dollars are very scarce here in Ontario, and we do need to use them responsibly and wisely. I'm going to talk in a moment about how cap-and-trade is not a wise use of those dollars.

Cap-and-trade around the world has been proven to be ineffective. Between 2005 and 2013, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick achieved the largest emissions reductions of all Canadian provinces, without the use of carbon pricing. Experts have been clear that the price for carbon needed to meet future emission targets and change consumption patterns would have to be much higher than what is being proposed.

For example, Mr. Paul Boothe, a member of the Eco-fiscal Commission, recently stated that in order for Canada to meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets that it agreed to at the Paris summit, a carbon tax of \$150 to \$200 would be needed. So it appears that these initial costs that we heard about last week, the cost increases on gasoline and natural gas, are just the tip of the iceberg.

0930

At this point, Speaker, I would also like to recognize Ms. Aldyen Donnelly, the president of WDA Consulting, for the excellent article she has published on this topic. Ms. Donnelly has advised both industry and governments on emission reduction strategies. Ms. Donnelly's observation on cap-and-trade programs is that they are "inefficient and regressive" and allow governments to "pick corporate winners and losers." Where have we seen that before? Just think of their dismal green energy failure. It's a very concerning situation when it's almost like déjà vu or Groundhog Day. Here we go again, with the Liberal government setting themselves up to pick corporate winners and losers.

I'd like to paraphrase a statement from Ms. Donnelly that is especially pertinent to the proposed Liberal cap-and-trade program, stating that "carbon/energy taxes translate into green goods-producing job growth is ... a myth." That sounds very similar to Mr. Greg Sorbara's comments earlier. She went on to say that 100% of the job growth in carbon/high-energy-dominated jurisdictions has been in the public sector, as goods-producing jobs flee. Again, 100% of job growth in carbon/high-energy-dominated jurisdictions has been in the public sector, as goods-producing jobs flee.

We've talked about the leakage. We've talked about how we're nervous that this Liberal cap-and-trade scheme will drive business to our neighbouring states. Unfortunately, if they stay the route, that's exactly what's going to happen here in Ontario. In looking at existing cap-and-trade markets, other analysts have noted that cap-and-trade has not so far proven to be an efficient means to reduce emissions. Reductions have been achieved through economic downturns, technological advances, product standards, changes to alternate fuels and energy-intensive industry moving to other jurisdictions—and there's that leakage that I spoke about.

At the end of the day, the Liberal government's cap-and-trade approach appears to be more about raising government revenues and economic control than making meaningful progress towards lowering greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change. The purpose of Bill 172 is to establish a price on carbon by means of a cap-and-trade program that will change the behaviour of everyone across the province and allow Ontario to link to Quebec and California in the Western Climate Initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The government of Ontario "envision[s], by 2050, a thriving society generating fewer or zero greenhouse gas emissions. Businesses and innovators will be creating world-leading low-carbon technologies and products that drive new economic growth, productivity and job creation."

Mr. Speaker, before we begin to even talk about zero emissions, perhaps we should examine some mundane realities. It's no secret that this Liberal government has increased Ontario's debt to over \$300 billion. I believe this past Thursday we heard it was going to be \$308 billion—unacceptable. The province's fiscal situation is dire. We no longer have the luxury of stretch goals. They have to be let go of. We don't have the luxury of stretch goals, wasteful spending or implementing costly initiatives without clear, empirical evidence that the program is fact-based, will fulfill its mandate and that benchmarks will be met in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

Ontarians have a right to expect that—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, hi. If you want to have an ongoing conversation, you might want to take it outside—the member from Etobicoke Centre. Please. Actually, there were only four people that weren't involved in a conversation. It's getting tough to even hear the speaker when she's speaking.

Thanks so much.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you, Speaker.

Again, the province's fiscal situation is dire, and Ontarians have a right to expect that a bill which will impose additional financial burdens will be thoroughly vetted with regard to costs and benefits and that it is in the public interest to proceed. There's no more meat on the bones, so to speak.

If the Liberal government is going to introduce a cap-and-trade scheme to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then they had better be clear about the long-term costs of this program and exactly what tangible emission reduc-

tions will be realized. We've had enough of their stretch goals.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay. I've asked you three times. I can hear everything you guys are saying, just about. Why are you so loud? Can't you just take it outside, the three of you? A lot of times you people yell to each other rather than go and sit beside each other. I'm sorry you're disappointed, but I've got a job to do.

Continue.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** If the Liberal government is going to introduce a cap-and-trade scheme to reduce emissions, they had better be clear about the long-term costs. We want to know exactly the cost of this program, exactly what tangible emission reductions will be realized, or if Ontario will meet its targets mainly through purchasing carbon allowances from its partners in the Western Climate Initiative.

Let's talk about buying emission reductions. Ontario's emission target for 2020 is 150 megatonnes, yet the province's emissions are expected to reach 168 megatonnes. To achieve Ontario's targets, emissions will have to fall to 110 megatonnes by 2030 and 35 megatonnes by 2050.

Dave Sawyer of EnviroEconomics projects a gap of 18 megatonnes in Ontario's 2020 target of 15% below 1990. In order to close that gap, Mr. Sawyer's analysis projects that Ontario emitters would have to purchase 11.5 megatonnes of allowances from Western Climate Initiative partners. Some of what we're hearing is that many of those credits will have to be purchased from California in US dollars. Does that make any sense?

Ontario could reduce the other 6.5 megatonnes at the WCI allowance price in 2020 of C\$17.16 per tonne. The cost for the Ontario 6.5-megatonne abatement would be approximately \$55 million, and the cost for Ontario emitters to purchase the 11.5 megatonnes of carbon allowances from the WCI initiative partners would be worth \$205 million.

The EnviroEconomics analysis assumed a coverage of 85% of Ontario's emissions in 2020 while the Liberal announcement puts the figure at 82%. The government expects revenues of \$1.9 billion in the first year: 60% of this \$1.9 billion would come from transportation and 27% from buildings. EnviroEconomics estimates auction revenue to be approximately eight times greater than the actual cost of emission reductions. So the total cost for Ontario to close the 18-megatonne gap to achieve its 2020 target would be \$261 million.

Let's look at these carbon allowances. Large emitters in Ontario are paying \$205 million to help Ontario achieve its 2020 target. According to Ms. Donnelly, there have been concerns raised about California's carbon market with regard to the high number of free allowances distributed, accounting practices and the actual reduction value of the carbon allowance. Due to these concerns, none of the other US states that participated in the Western Climate Initiative have linked their emissions trading markets to California. If Ontario emitters are planning to

buy these California allowances, do these allowances represent meaningful emission reductions or meaningless paper proxies? Why should Ontarians send their money to another jurisdiction to reduce emissions there? Surely, the public would prefer that their tax dollars be spent on environmental initiatives right here within the province of Ontario.

Speaker, we should think carefully about the beneficial environmental improvements that \$261 million could fund in Ontario, or what cleaner technology upgrades Ontario companies could afford to install with that money—technology that would make an actual reduction in greenhouse gases.

The other problem with California carbon allowances is that they are not recognized by the US Environmental Protection Agency due to the double-counting of reductions. Ms. Donnelly correctly raises the question that when the Environmental Protection Agency sets out greenhouse gas emission tariffs on imports from Quebec and Ontario, will the EPA recognize carbon allowances that Quebec and Ontario bought from California, when the EPA doesn't accept their reduction claims in the US?

0940

There are so many questions, and in meeting with stakeholders, the issue of the higher number of free allowances given to large California emitters has been raised. Industry and manufacturers are concerned that the carbon allowances that they buy from California emitters were given to them free by the government. Not only do these allowances not represent an actual emissions reduction; this imbalance puts Ontario industry at a competitive disadvantage.

For example, in California, natural gas distributors receive free allowances that they must use to assist their customers with cost increases, which helps protect smaller natural gas users who have no other fuel options. The natural gas industry in Ontario, conversely, is concerned that they are not receiving initial free allowances like their counterparts in Quebec and California. If there is not a level playing field in this province, how can our natural gas industry remain competitive?

Other issues raised by stakeholders are that volatility in the regulations and the price of carbon will create an uncertain climate for investment. Industry stakeholders have been clear that they are concerned at the speed in which this cap-and-trade scheme is being moved forward, and the difficulty in complying with regulations, oversight enforcement and reporting mechanisms. While some large emitters will receive free carbon allowances and will be able to afford the administrative cost of compliance, these extra costs will become one more regulatory burden for small to medium-sized businesses. Many of these same small and medium-sized businesses, which provide 88% of the province's jobs, may not have viable options for switching fuel or cutting back on transportation costs. The cost of compliance with cap-and-trade will remove capital from businesses that may have been used to expand the operation or hire new staff.

While the government—the Liberal government in particular—will wax poetic about all the new clean tech-



nology and alternate energy jobs this cap-and-trade system will provide, I think a healthy dose of skepticism is warranted. Again, we can't trust them to get it right. We heard claims from the Liberals about how the HST and the Green Energy Act would create 165,000 jobs, and we all know how that has turned out. Despite previous unsuccessful attempts at social engineering, the Liberal government is once again aiming to change everyone's behaviour via this cap-and-trade scheme. However, analysts have been clear that the price of carbon would have to be very high in order to effect change.

As I unfortunately hear so often from my constituents, an alarming number of Ontario residents and businesses are struggling to make ends meet. I'm sure we all have constituents who have come to us with that problem and that concern. When a bill is introduced that will increase costs for Ontarians even further, as legislators we have a duty right here in this House to review that measure very carefully to see if increasing the financial burden on residents and businesses is absolutely necessary, and if it is, to minimize costs where we can and to make sure we're giving the best value for their tax dollars. But this Liberal government, time and again, has not done that.

The one thing I do not understand is that despite the public being very vocal that rising energy costs are causing undue hardships to both families and businesses, the Liberal government has once again introduced a measure that will increase the cost of electricity, heating and gasoline. If ratepayers cannot afford their electricity costs now, logically it follows that they won't be able to afford the increases this government has announced as of last week, and natural gas or gasoline either. This magical thinking, these stretch goals that bring the government to think Ontarians can continue to absorb endless costs and increases, have got to end.

Now let's talk specifically about Bill 172. With all of these concerns in mind, we have to drill down on this particular bill. Some observers of this issue may feel like they're having a little *déjà vu*, or, as I said or alluded to earlier, watching the movie *Groundhog Day*. They may ask, "Didn't the Liberal government champion a cap-and-trade scheme in the middle of a recession seven years ago?" The answer is: Yes, they did. In fact, the Liberals passed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act in 2009 under Bill 185 to set up a cap-and-trade scheme. Then they established reporting regulations for greenhouse gas emissions. At that time, we were told that this bill was vital and that the Liberals would be setting up cap-and-trade any day. That was 2009.

In fact, the former Liberal environment minister said during debate, "Bill 185 is a critical piece of legislation that, if passed, would allow us to create a ... cap-and-trade system for Ontario that could link to other emerging North American systems." Well, Speaker, it appears Bill 185 wasn't such a critical piece of legislation after all. Out of fear of collapsing Ontario's economy after the great recession, the Liberals shelved their emissions-trading law and waited for a more opportune time to lock the province into the scheme. With the law on the books

it was left to collect dust for a few years, but with the reporting regulations in place everyone assumed it was only a matter of time until the Liberals imposed their cap-and-trade scheme.

But that wasn't the case. The Liberals missed the 2012 start date for the Western Climate Initiative, and they didn't say a word. Why was that? A minority government, perhaps? But I'd look at my colleagues who were elected in 2011. Our party asked questions about the scheme, but the Liberals pretended that it was a figment of our imagination; that is, until last year when it became politically advantageous for the Premier to, once again, push cap-and-trade.

The Premier stood in front of the cameras—yet another photo op in April 2015—to proclaim she was going to introduce cap-and-trade for our children and grandchildren. Never mind the skyrocketing hydro; forget about the increased cost of living; and, according to the Premier, leave the province's \$300-billion debt to the next generation.

It's not really hard to see why the Liberals have this arrogant perspective. They have grown so out of touch with ordinary Ontarians that they can't understand the priorities of families who are struggling to make ends meet and who are sometimes left scrounging for some extra cash just to pay the next heating or electricity bill. They can't understand that the increased hydro rates are leaving seniors with fixed incomes in the cold during the winter. These are our realities in our ridings.

As I said earlier, Speaker, the only things that matter to this Premier and this government are taking more money out of Ontarians' pockets and smiling for the cameras at a good photo op. The Premier herself admitted that cap-and-trade is just about the money when, last year, in April 2015, I was standing there and she arrogantly challenged the media to "go ahead and call it a tax." We just shook our heads.

The troubling part is that this tax is about to become a reality very soon. Here we are debating Bill 172 seven years after the government passed its first cap-and-trade legislation, yet the speakers want you to believe they're sincere when they say they need to scrap the old cap-and-trade law to replace it with a new one. Is this government saying that they failed with the first law? We know they failed with many other initiatives. Or is this government's true motivation to pass a new cap-and-trade law that could be used, as I said, as a PR document to peddle the Liberals' latest spin?

I think the answer is that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change needs to be honest and truthful, not only with this House but Ontario's people as well.

Let's talk about the regulatory scheme. The old cap-and-trade law and Bill 172 share one distinct feature: Virtually every pertinent detail is left to regulation. All we know from reading Bill 172 is that the Liberals design the system, set the rules, select the participants, appoint the officials and, of course, pick the winners and losers, just like their failed green energy scheme. Because every-

thing is left to regulation, the government at any time could change the structure of the scheme, the trading rules, the reporting requirements or the powers of the minister to intervene in the carbon market—all dangerous red flags right there.

To quell opposition, the Liberals have doled out free allowances to certain sectors while only targeting the natural gas and petroleum industries with excessive new compliance costs. Still, industries that have bought into the cap-and-trade need to see it for what it really is.

The Liberal scheme is a Trojan Horse under the banner of a market-driven solution. It's a Trojan Horse. Does everybody know and recall the story about the Trojan Horse? Once it opens up, it'll be nothing more than command-and-control economics. This is a very dangerous path that this Liberal government has chosen to put Ontario on, and I am very concerned about the future for taxpayers, our seniors on fixed income and the next generation.

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The government will create onerous new rules for the industry that, if broken, will result in severe penalties. Like any command-and-control structure, we know that the game will be rigged. Those who will stand to benefit are the Liberals and their friends, as I've alluded to before, just like their green energy scheme. It's very frustrating and maddening.

In terms of administration, of course, the two groups that stand to lose are Ontario taxpayers and manufacturers, as I've mentioned before. And there are no signs that this government will do anything to prevent excessive increases to natural gas, fuel and electricity bills. Why would the Liberals care in the first place? After all, they need \$300 million just to set up cap-and-trade, and that doesn't even account for the scheme's operational costs.

The Liberals have provided estimates. We know that the environment ministry will need a department of staff to pore over registration, reporting and verification data from the companies that are in the system. Of course, part of the funding for these services will be from general revenue and part will be from administrative fees. How much will the fees be? We don't know, Speaker. How many fees will there be? Yet again, we don't know, and that's because, again, the Liberals have not released the regulations to the public.

Let's talk about enforcement. As I said before, we don't know much about the real meat on the bones, but unlike Bill 151, the Liberals are relying on existing enforcement officers rather than creating a whole new branch of cap-and-trade cops. Bill 151 is creating a whole new team of "waste cops" but, with regard to cap-and-trade, they are keeping the enforcement close at hand. Speaker, I must say it's always a pleasant surprise to see when the Liberals don't include provisions that attempt to create an entirely new enforcement branch for one proposed law.

Bill 172 contains stiff penalties for serious offences like fraud, market manipulation and insider trading.

These offences, which are rampant in other cap-and-trade markets around the world, must be dealt with swiftly and harshly, but prevention is also the key. One way to prevent these offences is to deter people. Another, and I believe the better, way to prevent these crimes is not to set up a cap-and-trade market in the first place.

There are much simpler pricing systems, and do you know what? The Liberals have completely overlooked them. They are so ingrained, as I said. They first set up their mechanism legislation in 2009. They were not interested in any other pricing system. They totally ignored all the aggregated comments that were generated through climate change consultations last winter. Every consultation I attended—and I attended four and I read the reports from the other three—the general consensus, by the people attending them, was that perhaps a carbon tax was a better place to land. But the Liberals, knowing what they needed, knowing that they were cash-strapped, knowing that they had to get their hands on dollars in a quick way, continued to favour their cap-and-trade scheme. We all know that simple pricing systems are easier to enforce, require less administration, and don't create a system that can be easily gamed by fraudsters. Again, the Liberals set their stake in the sand in 2009, and here we are dealing with it today in 2016.

In terms of penalties Bill 172 also covers administrative infractions, which one would assume would be failures to submit reporting or registration information. But of course, Ontario businesses don't know what would be considered an administrative contravention because—you guessed it—we're still waiting for yet another regulation to define exactly what that means. All we know from the bill is that individuals can face fines up to \$1 million and that they are subject to absolute liability. Again, for everyone who's listening, because this part is important, individuals can face fines up to \$1 million and they are subject to absolute liability.

Speaker, I just want to make sure everyone is clear on what "absolute liability" is. Subsection 54(10) says that a person must pay an administrative penalty applies "even if,

"(a) the person took all reasonable steps to prevent the contravention; or

"(b) at the time of the contravention, the person had an honest and reasonable belief in a mistaken set of facts that, if true, would have rendered the contravention innocent."

Speaker, could you imagine, if you had a business that was about to be regulated under this proposed law, that even though you do your best to comply, even if you're honest, even if you took all reasonable steps forward, you're guilty? That's a daunting standard to set for this industry, in this province. The minister should clarify this section, and how the regulation will work, as soon as possible.

Now let's talk about the greenhouse gas reduction account. Of course, there's total immunity for the government, just like there's total discretion for the minister on how to spend the \$1.9 billion created from the cap-



and-trade every year. This is the part of the proposed act that I have a lot of trouble with. According to Bill 172, the money from emissions trading will flow into general revenue, and the amounts will be recorded in the Liberals' GHG reduction account, or slush fund. The environment minister then has the authority to decide which programs and projects will receive funding from the amounts recorded in this account.

Speaker, the government has said it is going to use cap-and-trade revenues to cover its \$325-million spending spree on the Green Investment Fund, but we all know it will be used for much more than just this. The Liberals will rake in cap-and-trade money and use it to pay for years of government waste and a long list of Liberal pet projects.

In schedule 1, there is a lot to be said, so I'd like to speak a little bit more about my concerns about what projects the Liberals intend to fund with the cap-and-trade money. Schedule 1 has them all set out.

There are segments of schedule 1 that truly are alarming. It states that projects which reduce greenhouse gases may be funded, in whole or in part, from this account. It then lists different types of projects that would qualify: "The production or installation of renewable, low-carbon, carbon-free ... energy." It sounds like more turbines, perhaps.

"The research, development ... of technologies that eliminate or reduce" the use of greenhouse-gas-emitting fuels: It will be interesting to see where that lands.

Another segment is, "Distributed renewable energy generation and ... technologies to support load-shifting, energy storage, net metering and other measures to eliminate the need for grid-based electricity during natural gas peaking."

Honestly, Speaker. Apparently, this Liberal government did not learn anything from the economic and technical chaos unleashed on this province through their Green Energy Act. In Bill 172, the government is planning to double down with another ill-advised energy scheme. Instead of private companies borrowing capital and building energy projects, it appears the Liberal government will be using the revenue extracted from Ontarians through the increases in gasoline, natural gas, and goods and services to fund renewable energy initiatives. If these types of projects were cost-effective, the private sector would already be investing in them. Why does the government have to dabble? If they were cost-effective, market-driven initiatives would be leading the way with private investment. In terms of emissions, will these technologies ever recover the emissions required to construct them? A quick Google search provides an extensive list of renewable energy firms which have gone bankrupt as soon as their government subsidies ran out. It is a sad state of affairs.

Now we have 570,000 households living in energy poverty in this province. I question whether Ontario rate-payers can afford more expensive, subsidized power, especially as our electricity supply is about 80% emissions-free already.

This section of schedule 1, combined with Bill 135, which transfers independent planning and procurement authority from the IESO, and the transmission approval from the Ontario Energy Board, to the Minister of Energy, is bound to cause further instability in the energy sector.

As we all read in the Financial Post, Ontario is the most indebted sub-sovereign borrower in the world. We most certainly do not have money to waste on unproven generation sources which will not be able to power a modern industrialized society.

Let's talk about agriculture for a second as well. I'm proud that my riding is a breadbasket for Ontario, and I'm concerned about the impact that this Liberal scheme will have on our agricultural industry.

As I reflect on it, I'd like to share with you a few lines from a press release my office received back on December 18 from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture that I think perfectly highlights the concerns I've been hearing from our farming community.

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"New regulations to reduce emissions mean carbon will have a price tag at the farm. That means farmers could see the cost of inputs rise as additional charges are added to things like electricity, steel, concrete and fertilizers, where emissions arise from their production.

"Agriculture must be recognized for the existing efforts made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration with no-till practices, feeding regimes for ruminants, and fertilizer management. Ontario farmers could see future opportunities in carbon credits, offsetting emissions from other companies producing greenhouse gases....

"Farmers need to be consulted and engaged to reach transparency and equity."

If this government truly wants to take action on climate change, they should be looking to those who depend on the earth for their livelihoods for solutions. They must recognize the efforts that Ontario farmers have made to be good stewards of the land and allow them to work with businesses to offset their carbon emissions. This is especially important when you consider the benefits that their efforts are bringing to our economy.

According to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, in the greater Golden Horseshoe area alone, the industry supplies \$1.6 billion in environmental benefits per year, including absorption of carbon pollution, water filtration, protection against erosion, and runoff control. If this government isn't already looking into opportunities that the agricultural community can afford industry in offsetting carbon emissions with figures like these, they need to consult more.

Another issue with this proposed legislation is the government's underdeveloped plan to accredit offsets. Offset credits are intended to give emitters an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The government has offered little explanation about how it intends on structuring the allocation of offsets.

I'm very concerned about this whole Bill 172. It's just a reason to set up and support the Liberal slush fund.

After all, it doesn't make business sense to promote green initiatives if the government might only credit them in the future.

And, as always, there is the question of cost. What will be the costs associated with the regulation of offsets and of the cap-and-trade scheme more broadly? Will the government need to train new employees? Will businesses have to cut jobs to hire someone familiar with this complicated system? How will the government find the financial resources to train or hire qualified employees? The government has yet to answer any of these questions. This lack of transparency will only serve to diminish investor confidence in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank the member from Huron-Bruce for her extensive speech on this matter and her canvassing of a wide variety of issues.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Do you agree with any of it?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I have to say that there are a number of things that I disagree with with regard to the member's commentary. I also have to say—and don't think less of me, Speaker—that I agree with some of what she has to say. Occasionally, I agree with the Liberals. Don't think less of me for that. That's just the way life is sometimes.

I think that the member from Huron-Bruce was correct in saying that the bulk of the reductions that are needed in Ontario with regard to action on climate change will come from investment in energy efficiency; on dealing with sprawl; investing in transit; and making investments in, and drawing products from, innovative activities.

Where I disagree with the member—I'll start with the line of argument she was using about the small percentage of global emissions that come from Canada and from Ontario. That is an argument that can be used, frankly, around the world to take no action. If you're operating a factory in Shenzhen, China, you could say, "My factory's small; its total impact on the world is vanishingly small. We shouldn't be taking any action."

If you go past a polluted stream and you throw in a bucket of paint, that bucket of paint is not going to change that stream; it's still polluted, but it is wrong to throw in that bucket of paint. Our contribution may be small compared to the world as a whole, but each small contribution changes the world's climate and threatens the stability of our society and our environment.

I was a bit confused by the member saying that cap-and-trade was a market mechanism and was command and control. I think you've got to pick one of those.

There will be other comments as time goes on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm delighted for this opportunity to respond to the member from Huron-Bruce—a wonderful community up there. I get up there often. I used to fly-fish the Maitland River when I had time—and Benmiller Inn. It's a beautiful part of the country. I

appreciate very much the extensive analysis she has done on the bill. I know that's her role as the critic for the party, and it's very important to have heard some of the materials coming from her.

I particularly want to focus on what I thought I was hearing early in her speech, which was a bit on the Conservative plan. I remember her saying, "The Conservative plan is"—and as I went to get a piece of paper to start writing it down, that was the end of it. I'll have to go back to Hansard tomorrow, maybe just to review what the Conservative plan is because it was so very, very short and sweet. We are hoping to get more details on what they think they would do that was somewhat different, as they're certainly not in that speech I got from the critic today.

I want to focus a little bit on this concept of her concern about fraud and how it may be identified in other markets in Europe particularly, the early adopters of cap-and-trade systems. The world has learned from mistakes that were made in how to set up the proper initiatives to cover off fraud. We're very clear that, as a result of what we know—and we are setting up very strict oversight rules for the cap-and-trade market that will guard against fraudulent behaviour. We're working very closely with the Western Climate Initiative, an agency that helps to monitor and put the systems in place; that is consistent with what they're doing in California, which is consistent with what they're doing in Quebec. It's extraordinarily important that we recognize that. I agree with the member from Toronto-Danforth. This whole notion that we are only a small piece of the puzzle, that we shouldn't do anything but throw our hands up in the air, and we have to understand that we think globally but we act locally, and every individual can do their part and by doing their part send a signal to the neighbour, the people down the street and the country next door to do their part—it's absolutely critical that we not use a *de minimis* argument like: We're only a little part of the problem; therefore, we should do nothing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's a pleasure to stand in this House and actually speak to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act.

First of all, I want to commend our critic from Huron-Bruce. She takes her role as our critic for the environment and climate change very, very seriously. She researches, she delves into things, and she's got backbone, and that's one of the things I truly appreciate about her efforts in our caucus. When we talk about proper consultation—I was touching base with her earlier, and I asked, "So, how much consultation has the government done on this?" She told me: "Listen, do you know what? They don't listen to the recommendations and the consultations. They just have their minds set, and that's the way they want to go."

I heard earlier a member's comment about, "Oh, the Conservative plan"—and then stop there. The fact of the matter is: They're the government. They're the ones that



are supposed to be coming up with the ideas, recommendations and suggestions, but they do that by effectively listening to people throughout the province. They're not doing that. They have their minds set, and this is the direction they're going to go. As far as I'm concerned, they just don't have a credible plan to tackle climate change.

One of the other things that I'm kind of concerned about is that they like to throw out what I call shiny objects. They get people chasing shiny objects to distract them or detract from the real message.

The last thing that I want to simply talk about here is the fact that they are requiring natural gas and petroleum industries to purchase all their emission allowances during the first compliance period. That's why the cost of natural gas, gasoline, diesel and propane are going to go up. I'm concerned because Union Gas is in my area, and that's going to affect a big company, a big employer in Chatham-Kent-Essex.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to have a moment to thank the member from Huron-Bruce for her very intensive report. She is the critic for this portfolio, and as a Conservative, she would put forward their branding and the way that they feel about cap-and-trade.

New Democrats support cap-and-trade, but we find a lot of errors—not errors; a lot of difficulty with the bill and concerns that it would have on the affected people. We need to make sure that the bill is fair, that people can afford their Union Gas bill when it comes into their home, that an increase on them when they are already struggling paycheque-to-paycheque, month-to-month to get those bills paid is difficult. I've heard from a lot of people in my community about the increase of gas at the pump. The prices were just starting to come down. People were starting to be able to breathe a little easier with the price of gasoline, and now there's a 4.3% increase on every litre. It's a huge chunk, again, being put into taxes.

We are also concerned about where these dollars are going to go. It's a lot of money that's going to be going into the provincial coffers. Where is that money going to go? Is it going to be designated completely for climate change and environment? We're not sure, so we're concerned about the fairness and we're concerned about the transparency and where that's going to happen.

I've also read concerns about the Environmental Commissioner being let in on initiatives and what's happening; there are no regulations to make sure that they are being brought in. That's a huge concern. We need to make sure that our Environmental Commissioner is on top of this also.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Huron-Bruce has two minutes.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the comments from my colleagues from Toronto-Danforth, Beaches-East York, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Hamilton Mountain. We all have to home in on one thing: We have to do right by the Ontario

taxpayer. No matter what partisan flavours would like to paint us differently, we all want to do our part to protect the environment, but all the while, we can't take Ontarians for granted, because their pockets are becoming lighter and lighter.

I believe, honestly, that Ontarians want to do their part to reduce emissions. Again, Ontario's total global greenhouse gas emission is less than half a percentage point, and in no way should my comments be misconstrued to mean we can't do better. We all can do better because we care about the environment. My point is that less than half a percentage point should not be generating \$1.9 billion in a slush fund for Liberals to use for pet projects, for Liberals to fill their coffers because of their mismanagement and waste. That's what's unacceptable. They are raising \$1.9 billion on the backs of Ontarians, and they're also using their plan for a PR stunt. It's unacceptable.

Ontarians deserve to know the truth. Our party will go forward in an honest matter. We'll listen to our stakeholders, because we need a credible plan. We need to embrace innovation. We need to allow industry to lead the way. Our party doesn't ever want to see industry chased out of the province. In the manner in which this government has set up their cap-and-trade scheme, Ontarians are going to be poorer and we're going to lose more jobs because industry is going to choose to relocate elsewhere. That is an absolute shame.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Lorne Given from the town of Petrolia, joining us in the west members' gallery this morning. Thank you.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I would like to welcome to the assembly the parents of page Luke Bentley and two of my constituents from Barrie: Michael Bentley and Michelle Legault.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It is my great pleasure to introduce my brother, who is a teacher from the Toronto District School Board. He is with some students today: Klara Billa, Jaelynn Edwards, Claire Melanson, Kayenne Sin-Lu, Aphrodite Szalontay and Cassandra Sukraj.

If I can brag a little bit, my brother's students—their artwork is displayed downstairs in the Legislature here, so they're here to check out their artwork. And, if you'll indulge me, I would also like to wish my brother a happy birthday.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'd like to welcome, in the east members' gallery, visiting from Victoria, BC, my high school classmate Maxine Charlesworth and her husband, Derek Reimer.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I notice in the gallery Rob MacIsaac, the head of Hamilton Health Sciences, with a couple of friends who were here for this morning's breakfast on health research. Welcome.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Further to that, we did have members of the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario visiting us today. I'd like to introduce Karen Michell, who is the executive director; Barry McLellan, who is CEO of Sunnybrook; Robert MacIsaac, CEO of Hamilton Health Sciences; and Bernard Leduc, who is CEO of Hôpital Montfort. Thank you very much for visiting us.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I would like to introduce somebody in the gallery. Jashun is a volunteer in my constituency office. She's also pursuing post-graduate studies in public administration, so she wanted to come and find out what question period was like.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I was also this morning at the breakfast for the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario. From Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute this morning, Dr. Reznik and Janet Northan, doing great work at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, creating a knowledge-based economy in northern Ontario. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Premier. The seniors' advocacy group CARP has said that the government's changes to the seniors' drug benefit will "have a significant negative impact on many seniors." Because of that, I have a simple yes-or-no question. Will the government reverse their plan to nearly double the deductible on seniors paying for their medications: yes or no?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. When it comes to supporting seniors, this budget has a tremendous number of initiatives. I know the Minister of Health is going to want to speak to the specific issue that the Leader of the Opposition has raised, but let's just take a look at some of the things that we are doing to support—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I gave it a short moment to see if it could take care of itself.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:**—an additional \$250 million to expand capacity in home and community care; \$75 million over three years to expand community-based hospice and palliative care.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Dufferin-Caledon.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're expanding access to the low-income seniors benefit to 170,000 more seniors.

We're making the shingles vaccine free. We're removing the debt retirement charge, and that saves seniors on average \$70 a year. There are many more.

I look forward to the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Acting Premier: I appreciate her talking points on this file, but the reality is that on Monday the leader of the third party raised a valid concern about how this affects seniors, and you brushed it aside. You didn't give it a real answer. The government simply used a smoke-and-mirrors approach to hide the fact that seniors and the care they need and the medications they need are being diminished.

Now the Liberals have actually admitted that maybe they "didn't get it right"; that the change is now "out for consultation." It shouldn't have needed any more consultation. The Liberals ignored the entire pre-budget hearings—the entire process—and they didn't use common sense.

My question is: How out of touch is this government? How out of touch is this Liberal Party when they thought a senior making \$19,500 was rich? This government is clueless.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Start the clock.

Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, let me go to other aspects of the CARP response to our budget. The leader of the official opposition focused on one comment, and we welcome the comments from CARP. But they also welcomed the Ontario government's recognition of the special needs of those with dementia and other neurological conditions—they congratulated us for those investments—by investing \$10 million in Behavioural Supports Ontario. CARP also welcomes that the shingles vaccine will now be covered for seniors between the ages of 65 and 70, saving them approximately \$170.

But I find it rich coming from the leader of the official opposition, who for nine years was part of a government that—he never stood up for Ontario—decreased the Canada Health Transfer to Ontario. He never represented the needs of the people of this—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The next one will get my attention.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Simcoe-Grey; the member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Acting Premier: Seniors already have a tough time in this province because of what this government has done. This government has cut residency spots when 800,000 Ontarians can't find a family doctor. Seniors can't find a family physician. Now seniors are having a tougher time accessing physiotherapy. This comes because the government cut \$50 million from seniors' physiotherapy. One in 10



seniors already don't fill their prescriptions because of the cost that prohibits it. And now the government has just made medication twice as expensive for so many seniors.

My question is: When will this government stop their attack on Ontario's seniors?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I don't think anybody's buying that argument, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that 170,000 more low-income seniors will pay no annual deductible. They'll go from paying \$100 deductible annually to zero dollars. That's 170,000, for a total of almost 500,000. Ontarians are—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And how many seniors are in this province?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Ninety-two per cent get a hike.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'm not going to be bouncing up and down. The last two rounds were not acceptable, and I'm going to say now that I've been tempted—and I'll leave this for you to decide: Do we move right to warnings or naming? It's got to stop. I want to hear everybody when they're standing.

Minister?

1040

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, seniors in Ontario will continue to have the most generous and the lowest out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs in all of Canada. On average, the out-of-pocket is \$277 for Ontarians. The next closest province is more than \$600 per senior for their out-of-pocket expenses.

## ENERGY POLICIES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Since I can't get a straight answer on cuts to medications for seniors, let's try something else. Ontario's budget is still missing a credible plan to have affordable and competitive energy. The PC caucus had a simple ask: We wanted a plan to have affordable energy in the province of Ontario. The Liberal response was to offer \$2 a month as a rebate. This does nothing for a senior who has an \$800 hydro bill.

Mr. Speaker, is this government, is this Liberal Party embarrassed that their idea of energy relief is giving a toonie to Ontarians who are flooded by your cost because you've made a mess of the energy sector?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course, we on this side are anxiously awaiting their plan to reduce energy costs, Speaker. That seems to have been missing in action.

You know, the Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All right. We're moving to warnings, and I'll give them out.

Carry on.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Leader of the Opposition called us "clueless." Do you think it's clueless to offer free tuition to kids in low-income families and reduce tuition costs for middle-income families? Do you think that's clueless? Do you think it's clueless to spend \$160 billion on infrastructure? That's 110,000 jobs a year. Do you think that's clueless? Do you think it's clueless to add—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would not take that chance.

To the Chair, please. Finish.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, do they think it's clueless to lower parking fees for 900,000 patients and visitors? Do they think it's clueless to fund the shingles vaccine? Do they think it's clueless to invest \$100 million to help homeowners lower their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the Acting Premier: My question was on energy; I'd appreciate an answer on energy.

Not only did this budget do nothing to make energy more affordable; this budget did nothing to rein in the executive salaries at Hydro One that are completely out of touch with the rest of Canada. After this budget, the combined salaries of six hydro executives in four other provinces are still less than the \$4-million gold-plated paycheque you gave the CEO of Hydro One. After this budget, the CEO will still make twice as much as the three highest-paid executives at British Columbia Hydro.

Why didn't this budget rein in the lavish paycheques for your Hydro One execs?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Speaker, the question is premised on electricity prices and the level of electricity prices. Some of the examples that have been used of large numbers of monthly payments are true bills. They're typically in the rural and northern communities.

In our budget, access to natural gas infrastructure, we acknowledge, is crucial to the long-term economic fortunes of rural and northern Ontario. To mitigate prices, we've got a plan to take natural gas into rural and northern communities. The budget has a \$200-million loan program to expand natural gas. It proposes a \$30-million Natural Gas Economic Development Grant for rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, Union Gas, at the present time, has 11 applications before the Ontario Energy Board to bring natural gas to rural communities.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward-Hastings is warned.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, back to the Acting Premier and the Minister of Energy: What in the world does that have to do with the Hydro One salaries? I'd just appreciate an answer for once in this building. It would

be nice. It would be kind if the government could respond with an answer.

There is no plan for affordable energy. There is no plan to rein in Hydro One CEO salaries. There is no plan to stop the fire sale of Hydro One. This budget does nothing to recoup—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Finance is warned.

Carry on.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** This budget does nothing to recoup the billions of dollars you're giving away to our competitors because of your contracts. You're actually giving to our competitors.

The Premier says, "What is the cost of doing nothing?" Well, the cost of doing nothing is that families are paying \$1,000 more a year because of your government. My question is, will you do something? Will you actually do something on the energy sector? Ontarians can't afford these exorbitant—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I've indicated in this House over the last week or two that the average daily price for electricity in—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm only going to give you what you want. The member from Simcoe-Grey is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** The average daily residential price in Ontario is \$5. We have taken additional steps for the rural communities. The rural and remote electricity rate protection program is a rate equalization program that benefits rural and remote residential and farm customers, since the cost of distributing power to remote areas is much higher than in the urban areas. The program helps to offset the higher costs of providing service to customers in those areas.

Hydro One has also launched a conservation program of heat pumps. They subsidize the costs, which will lower costs in rural areas by \$800 to \$1,500 a year.

We're taking action. We're acknowledging the challenge in the rural and remote areas, and we're—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Telling a senior living on \$19,500 that the cost of their medication is going to double overnight is wrong.

Now the Premier says she's open to changing her plan to nearly double prescription costs for most seniors. Being open is a good thing, but being open to a change and actually making that change are very different things.

Let's be clear: Will the Liberal government commit to changing their plan today?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The Premier has been clear that we will be sure to get this right for all seniors. We're bringing 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors into a situation where they go from \$100 deductible each year to zero dollars deductible. I hope that's something, even though they haven't referenced or mentioned it, that even the NDP can support.

The Premier was also absolutely clear, as we put this forward for discussion and consultation, that there will be regulations required and that we'll be sure to get it right. If changes need to be made, we'll make those changes.

But it's important, and I plead for the third party to at least acknowledge the added value, the important impact that this is going to have, for the poorest of the poor, that they used to care about. The 170,000 new individuals—that will be almost half a million seniors—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The seniors of this province are pleading with this government not to increase their drug costs. You don't need a panel of experts to tell you that forcing seniors living on \$19,500 to pay nearly twice as much for their medication is the wrong decision.

The Premier says she agrees but she needs a consultation. Does the Liberal government really need a consultation to tell them that it's not fair to make struggling seniors pay even more for their medication?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Let's look at some of the comparisons across the country, and what this province has done for our seniors when it comes to out-of-pocket drug costs.

In Ontario, it's \$277. That's the average cost to a senior for the out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, apart from what the government provides for them. If we go to the province furthest west, in British Columbia, \$615 is the average annual out-of-pocket cost for our seniors. Alberta is \$613—an NDP government. Saskatchewan is \$884 for the annual out-of-pocket expenses. Manitoba is \$982. Quebec is \$698. Here in Ontario, the average out-of-pocket cost for a senior—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins-James Bay is warned.

You have a 10-second wrap-up.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We have the most generous prescription drug program in the entire country for seniors. There's no other province that comes even close. The next province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Final supplementary.

1050

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thursday's budget gave Ontario seniors a shock. For most of them, their drug costs are



going to nearly double this summer. For seniors living on a fixed income, this creates chaos. For a struggling senior, these costs could mean the difference between paying for rent or paying for their heating bill.

The Premier says she's consulting and that she's open to changes, but she won't say for sure if she's actually willing to make those changes at the end of the day, and these are still costs that are going to seriously affect seniors.

Will the Liberal government be clear today that they're fixing the Premier's mistakes and tell Ontarians that they'll see a new plan that will not attack seniors?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I am surprised, because at one moment, the member of the third party said that we need to consult more, and now he's suggesting that we not consult with seniors, that we not consult with their advocacy groups, that we not consult with Ontarians to make sure that we've got this absolutely right and that it works for all seniors.

I think that most seniors would agree that bringing 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors into that range where they pay absolutely no annual deductible is a good thing. We want to make sure that we've got it right for all seniors, and frankly, I think that the old NDP would have supported this. The new NDP, unfortunately, doesn't want consultations. They don't appreciate the 170,000 who no longer have to pay any annual deductible.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** The next question, again, is to the Deputy Premier. The Premier's plan to double the costs of medication for seniors was a mistake. It's a good thing that the Premier acknowledges that was a mistake and is working towards correcting it.

But we're hearing the government is also quietly making some changes to the tuition plan, saying it was their plan all along to tie grants to increasing tuitions, as well as to inflation.

What other mistakes does the Liberal government see in their budget and which of these mistakes will they be correcting?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I look up at the gallery, I look at the kids who join us in the Legislature every day, and we have an important message for those kids now that we could not give those kids before this budget. The message we can give kids now is that your job is to work hard, get the marks and get admitted into post-secondary education. You no longer need to worry about the financial barriers—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My operation in terms of this chair applies to everybody.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This change is absolutely transformational. It tears down a barrier that kids in low-income families and kids in moderate-income families have faced since the beginning of post-secondary education, and that is the financial barrier. Kids now can

succeed based on their willingness to work hard. We will make sure that money will never, ever stand in the way of students achieving their full potential.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Selling Hydro One is also a mistake; everyone knows it. Given that the Premier says that she may fix her mistake on the seniors' drug costs, will the Liberal government commit to correcting this mistake and not sell off our public asset?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The old NDP would have been applauding this budget. This budget contains investments that the old NDP would have been standing up and saying, "Well done. This reflects our values." Whether it's more investments in hospice and palliative care, whether it's removing the financial barrier for post-secondary education, whether it's investing in hospices and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Windsor-Tecumseh is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're proud of this budget. We think we've made the right investments that will improve the lives of people in this province. It's a budget that creates jobs. It's a budget that demonstrates strong fiscal management. We've worked hard to arrive at this, and overwhelmingly, people are saying, "You're making changes we never thought you'd be able to make."

Speaker, the NDP should get on board with us and support this budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I know that some of the old Liberals in this House remember when they spoke against the privatization of Hydro One—an interesting point you raise.

Let me tell you why, Mr. Speaker, this budget is so horrible and why the NDP will proudly vote against it: It's a mistake to slash \$430 million from education; it's a mistake to slash \$50 million from post-secondary and training; it's a mistake to slash \$1.2 billion from about everything else; and it's a mistake not to cap tuition fees.

This budget is a colossal mistake. Will the Liberal government admit that their budget is full of mistakes and commit to addressing those mistakes today?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this budget makes some really important investments that are no mistakes at all. Are you saying it's a mistake to increase funding for autism—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Chair, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —by \$355 million, Speaker? Are you saying it's a mistake to build 20 more hospices and support that community care? Are you saying it's a mistake—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm sorry. Third person; to the Chair. Thank you.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's astonishing to me that they think it's a mistake to remove the financial barrier to post-secondary education. You would think, Speaker, that that would have been a core value of the NDP. On that item alone, they should be applauding this budget. It's very disappointing that they have sunk into partisanship to attack this budget, which is a superb budget.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

## GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services of this old Liberal government. The bankruptcy of Goodwill Toronto is leaving hundreds out of work. Many wonder if they will ever see the severance pay owed to them. Yet last year, the government doled out \$4 million to Goodwill, including nearly \$1.7 million from MCSS. What do they have to show for it, besides the \$230,000 CEO salary? That money, like the millions and millions blown in the SAMS fiasco, is gone—gone, with zero accountability and no consequences.

My question is this: Does it surprise the minister to know that, as far as taxpayers are concerned, the Liberals have abused all of their goodwill?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Of course, we, on this side of the House, take employment supports for those with disabilities extremely seriously. So, of course, we were shocked when we all read about what happened at Goodwill Toronto.

I'd like to tell the member opposite that, since then, we have reached out to every one of our clients served by Goodwill to determine how best to support each individual and minimize disruption. We have now made sure that many of these individuals have new employment supports because, of course, our ministry provided funding to Goodwill to support individuals with a disability, including developmental disabilities, to find employment in their communities locally.

I will, in the supplementary, give a little more detail in terms of our funding arrangement with Goodwill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I hope this minister is listening to people who tell her what is really going on. Media quoted Goodwill insiders who said that MCSS funding was improperly diverted, leaving disabled clients without proper staff or resources. Executives, according to the Toronto Sun report, expensed things like car washes "with no apparent checks and balances," and staff didn't get the training they needed.

The minister needs to tell us why she rewarded such dysfunction with millions of dollars. Why didn't the minister hold this CEO accountable? Why did the minister treat the CEO with the same kid gloves they used with Chris Mazza at Ornge?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Of course, Goodwill's funding was provided on a monthly basis. As soon as the ministry became aware of the program closure, all payments were stopped. We will be working through the bankruptcy process to recover any funds owed to the ministry. Of course, our focus at this time is to help our clients transition.

I can assure the member opposite that any unused funds will be returned throughout this process. Our ministry does ensure that an agency is always in compliance. We looked very closely at the 2014-15 commitments and we discovered at that time, through our very detailed transfer payment process, that the agency was in compliance, and I want to assure the member that we will be diligent in recovering any unused funds.

1100

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, the government introduced its 2016 budget: fewer jobs for today and tomorrow. That's a fair statement. The government has admitted, in black and white, that job projections are down by 60,000, and according to the Financial Accountability Officer, Ontario's total employment for 2015 matched the weakest annual job gains since the recession.

Minister, this question is for the Ontarians who have left the job market discouraged, for the Ontarians who are struggling to find work, and for the Ontarians who are about to begin their careers. Where is this government's job creation strategy?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'm going to allow my colleague to do the supplementary. Let's be clear: Ontario and Ontarians—the people of Ontario, the businesses of Ontario—because of the work we've done to stimulate economic growth and partner with business, have created over 608,000 net new jobs since the recession.

Furthermore, we're aiming to add 320,000 more new jobs over the next 36 months, bringing us to over 900,000 net new jobs. In the last eight weeks, we've added 50,000 new jobs, outpacing all of Canada. Our growth has outpaced the United States in percentage growth as well. We're proud of Ontarians. We support the people of Ontario, as should the NDP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** New Democrats believe that Ontarians deserve a secure job that can actually support a family, but this budget fails miserably on job creation. This budget doesn't address, for example, the fact that so many Ontarians across this province are working multiple jobs just to make ends meet. It also doesn't talk about the fact that, for nearly two years straight, Windsor has remained among the top two cities with the highest unemployment rate in the country. It has also conveniently left out the fact that for 144 months straight, Ontario's youth unemployment rate has beat the national number. That is not a record to be proud of.

Minister, what's this government's response to the thousands of Ontarians that it has clearly left behind?



**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, anybody listening to that rhetoric has got to wonder what the NDP is looking at when it comes to the health of our economy. They've got to wonder what economists they're consulting when they say that we're not gaining in jobs. The finance minister is absolutely right: 608,300 net new jobs since the global recession. That's only number one in the country. It's one of the leading jurisdictions in the industrialized world when it comes to job creation.

How many of those jobs are full-time? How about: 100% of those jobs are full-time. How many of those jobs are higher-income jobs? How about 75% of those jobs being in sectors that are higher income?

Let's stick to the facts: We're creating jobs; we're creating good jobs. We're creating jobs right across this province.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. As the minister knows, Ontario's social assistance programs are critical to our poverty reduction goals to support the most vulnerable members of our society. Maintaining an effective social safety net is one part of our government's broader effort to reduce poverty and ensure that we have an inclusive society and economy.

I have heard from single mothers in Bowmanville who struggle with child support and feel that they need more assistance. They have told me that the system can be complex to navigate for those who need it. In last week's budget, our government announced an income security reform process. Could the minister tell me more about her ministry's work to reform the income security system for vulnerable Ontarians?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member from Durham for that question.

Part of my mandate as Minister of Community and Social Services is to reform social assistance. Over the past year, my ministry has had ongoing discussions with stakeholders, experts and those on the front line. They told us that it's important to expand reform to include aspects of the wider income security system. We listened, and we will be engaging stakeholders in the coming year to develop an action plan for more comprehensive reform.

The plan will be informed by client experiences and a basic income pilot project, among other things. We will also engage with First Nations, Inuit and Métis nations to ensure we have had an inclusive process.

As we develop this action plan, we will continue to take important immediate steps to improve income security, such as ending the full clawback of child support from social assistance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** Thank you to the minister for sharing information about this important plan to improve our income security system for vulnerable Ontarians. It is vital that we reduce barriers to ensure we have a fair, adequate and accessible income security system that is simpler for Ontarians who are facing challenges in their lives.

We know that some of those Ontarians facing challenges are single parents and their children who receive social assistance. Families in Courtice and Port Perry have come to my office concerned about what is available to them and what we are going to do for them. The minister just mentioned ending the clawback of child support for social assistance recipients. Could the minister please share more information with me and my constituents about this important challenge to social assistance?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** We know that children in single-parent families are disproportionately and more profoundly affected by poverty. As part of our government's commitment to combating child poverty, as outlined in our 2016 budget, my ministry will be ending the full clawback of child support for social assistance recipients. Currently, families receiving child support have their social assistance benefit reduced by the full amount of child support they receive. This means that families on social assistance are no better off when they receive child support, and the parent responsible for making payments may feel little incentive to pay.

We would like to see a full exemption of child support for social assistance recipients, but it is important that we get the opinions we need on how best to solve the problem here in Ontario. What we know is that families who receive child support will see a positive change by this time next year.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is for the Acting Premier. In last week's budget, the only mention of human trafficking was the reannouncement of funding to address violence against indigenous women, an effort that is long overdue. But there is no new funding for more dedicated officers to investigate human trafficking, no new funding for dedicated crown attorneys to prosecute this disgusting crime, and no new funding for victims' services within that massive \$134-billion budget.

This government says human trafficking is a crisis. This government says that combatting this crime is a priority. This crime is stealing the innocence of our young women. Mr. Speaker, why is this government forcing the girl next door to continue to live in this nightmare?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, a colleague in Durham region with me, for raising this important topic

again. I want to also thank her for her work on the select committee on violence and harassment against women. I was very pleased that she was supportive of our Walking Together strategy that the Premier and I announced last week, a \$100-million investment to end violence against aboriginal women and girls.

But she's absolutely right: That's only part of the story. Human trafficking is a serious issue. It's a significant priority for our government. That's why the Premier asked the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I to spearhead additional work in human trafficking to build on the investments we've already made, and to bring that strategy forward this June.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** The Liberal government didn't address human trafficking enough in their budget. They didn't put it in Bill 132. How much longer do these victims and survivors have to wait?

We've learned from the experts that a trafficker can make over \$250,000 in a year from one victim. That's roughly \$5,000 a week from a single person. During the time that a trafficker makes \$5,000 in one week from one victim, this government has invested zero to combat this deplorable crime.

The Premier admitted that driving up drug costs for seniors was a mistake, so will the government admit that they got this one wrong and redirect resources to combat human trafficking today?

1110

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** We are actually continuing to invest in dealing with this despicable topic of human trafficking. We will invest over \$9 million over the next three years in our language interpreter program services. We provided \$225,000 in funding to the White Ribbon Campaign to develop and promote resources that engage young men in ending human trafficking. I could go on and on about a number of investments across ministries beyond my Ontario Women's Directorate.

We fund a victim's helpline service through, I believe, community services and corrections. We have provided additional money to help young people in shelters be aware of human trafficking conditions and to try to prevent that. We have more money for sexual violence programs across the province, and we'll continue to work with all the stakeholders in bringing forward a more robust human trafficking strategy—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## RING OF FIRE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Acting Premier. For over eight years, we have heard this government say that the Ring of Fire is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Year after year, we hear them make big promises; all have come back empty. This government, which claims to be committed to this project, continues to stand by and watch all companies leave and halt operations.

My question is, when they say "once in a lifetime," whose lifetime are you talking about?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I'm happy to respond to this question. For several years, our government has been laying the groundwork to drive smart, sustainable and collaborative development in the region of the Ring of Fire. We realize the full potential of the Ring of Fire, but it is an extremely complex undertaking that all parties have to be involved in.

We're supporting sustainable development in the Ring of Fire. Significant progress has been made. To date, our government has established a Ring of Fire Infrastructure Development Corp. We've made a \$1-billion commitment to develop transportation infrastructure in the region, and it was recently reiterated in our budget. We have reached a historic regional framework agreement with the Matawa First Nations that lays—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We were doing quite well, but it's never too late to get another warning or, for those that have gotten warnings, to get named. I'm not playing and it's not a roll of the dice. I'll do what I need to do if you don't.

Finish, please.

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The regional framework agreement lays the groundwork for future discussions with the Matawa First Nations. And just this past spring, we announced a joint investment with the federal government of more than—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Once again to the Acting Premier: Once again, we hear this government reannounce an old 2014 promise to invest \$1 billion in the Ring of Fire. It's clear that this is a copy-and-paste budget. This government continues to dangle this \$1-billion announcement over the heads of industry, northerners and First Nations without actually saying when it will give it. This project is dependent on transportation, infrastructure, electricity prices, environmental guidelines and leadership by this government, but they have failed on all accounts.

My question is: Will this government give a definite answer on when they will make good on this commitment, or will they wait to reannounce it again at campaign time?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** As I said before, we've invested \$785,000 to enable the Ring of Fire nations to complete a community service corridor study. That's one of the first steps to establishing a transportation corridor. Just this past June, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change approved various amendments with respect to terms of reference for the environmental assessment for Noront's Eagle's Nest project in the Ring of Fire.

We are serious about moving forward with the Ring of Fire. The PC party has not been engaged in this issue. The



former federal PC party was not engaged in this issue. When Ontario put up \$1 billion for the road corridor, the federal government ponied up a measly \$23 million. The Leader of the Opposition was a member of that party—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. New question.

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Ontario is home to a large, important indigenous population, but as we all know, this vital community faces many challenges and needs our support. That's why—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Look, this is going both sides. When somebody asks a question here, I'm hearing heckling from the same side that's asking the question, and I'm hearing heckling from the same side as the person asking the question and giving the answer. Please.

Finish, please.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, in our 2016 Ontario budget our government announced significant investments in important initiatives for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Ontario to support these communities. In fact, the Premier also announced a bold new strategy to end violence against aboriginal women before heading to the National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Can the minister please elaborate on these important announcements and their significance?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** This budget was a good-news budget for our First Nation communities. We have committed ourselves in this budget to a positive, collaborative relationship with Ontario First Nations.

Here are some of the things that we've done in the budget: The 2016 budget invests \$100 million over three years to fund a long-term strategy to end violence against indigenous women. The budget also provides another \$97 million to improve access to very high-quality, post-secondary education and training opportunities; \$5 million of this investment is for post-secondary education and training at the province's nine aboriginal institutes. There's a further \$13 million for First Nation green energy projects specifically aimed at eliminating the evil of diesel in our northern remote communities.

This is good news for First Nations. This is evidence of our commitment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Supplementary?*

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm glad to hear that the minister is working hard for Ontario's indigenous peoples, and I thank him for his tireless efforts. Our government is taking significant steps to improve outcomes

for indigenous people in this province, and I'm proud to be a part of that.

Last week, Minister Zimmer, Minister MacCharles and the Premier were in Winnipeg for the second National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Statistics show that in Ontario, indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violence than other women, and they are three times more likely to be murdered. This is unacceptable. The numbers are troubling, and they need to change. That's why the Premier recently announced our strategy to end violence against indigenous women and mandatory indigenous cultural competency training for the Ontario public service.

Can the minister please tell us more about what the budget does for indigenous peoples?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The budget provides \$100 million to develop a strategy against violence against aboriginal women and girls. I was with the Premier and Minister MacCharles in Winnipeg on Thursday and Friday. Ontario, in front of our other provincial colleagues—and the federal minister was there and the Premier of Manitoba. We presented our Ontario strategy, Walking Together. It was discussed at length at the meeting on Friday. It was incredibly well received by our provincial counterparts and the federal government.

There is much detail in this document. The document is entitled Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women. It was very well received. Ontario has exercised a leadership role, the Premier has exercised a leadership role, and all of the other provinces and the federal government have recognized—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## SERVICEONTARIO

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** To the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: In your budget, you plan to bring a digital-by-default philosophy to ServiceOntario and raise service fees, but the uptake in digital services by Ontarians hasn't progressed between 2012 and 2015, staying flat at 30%. We know where this leads: higher fees for everyone and an additional cost and inconvenience for constituents such as seniors, disabled Ontarians, Ontarians on fixed incomes, or those who don't have the knowledge, the confidence or the ability to operate a computer.

1120

Will the minister commit to ensuring that seniors, disabled Ontarians, those on social assistance and other Ontarians who need to visit a counter in person will be able to access quality, courteous, timely and helpful service without a cost penalty?

**Hon. David Orazietti:** I certainly appreciate the question from the member opposite. ServiceOntario is committed to the highest-quality standards of service for Ontarians, and has been for many, many years. As you

know, the average wait time is less than 15 minutes at ServiceOntario, and the number of services that we are continuing to provide online continues to be expanded while we continue to protect front-counter services. We have approximately 300 locations across the province. We continue to build the platform to make it easier and more timely for people to access services.

In the budget, we committed to transforming the health application for health cards. You'll be able to renew your health card online through ServiceOntario moving forward. We think that's great news for Ontarians. We're going to continue to make services more accessible for Ontarians as we continue to move forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Back to the minister: Your government is making everything more expensive—driving, camping, fishing, hunting, heating, filling prescriptions, charities, and even dying, with your new estate taxes. If it exists, you bilk Ontarians for it. The government's record is of higher prices for everything and less access to services to show for it.

Why does this government insist on making life more inconvenient and more expensive for all Ontarians, especially those like seniors, the disabled and the poor—those who can least afford it?

**Hon. David Orazietti:** The member is being a bit selective here in his questioning. I think when you talk about eliminating things like Drive Clean and free shingles vaccines and whatnot, there are a number of initiatives in the budget that are helping to support consumers across the province.

We continue to build a strong platform at ServiceOntario for accessibility and affordability. ServiceOntario delivers 88 services across 10 lines of businesses. All of the policies that are developed come from other ministries as well. ServiceOntario provides those services based on the policies through a variety of ministries.

The member needs to understand that the services that we continue to provide, we do so in a timely way and in an efficient way, putting more services online, making them more accessible and continuing to make it more convenient and more affordable, quite frankly, for all Ontarians to access services in our ministry.

## GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question today is to the Minister of Transportation. The 2016 budget mentioned GO to Niagara. Like everyone in the Niagara region, I was happy—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You won't know. Thank you.

Member?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I was happy to see that. This project is extremely important for the people of my riding and all of Niagara. This was a positive step forward and

highlights the hard work that the local mayors, councillors, regional chair and the member for St. Catharines have done to put Niagara GO on the radar of our government.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I think there are ways in which we can continue now.

Please finish.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** The expansion of GO train service to Niagara is not about scoring political points. Unfortunately, without firm commitments to a timeline, the people of Niagara still cannot be sure when expanded GO service will come to Niagara Falls.

Minister, does your government have a time frame for expanding GO train service all the way to Niagara Falls?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Niagara Falls for the question. I know that he has already said it, but I think it does bear repeating because it's important to recognize that not just over the last few months, not just over the last couple of years, but throughout his entire career here in this chamber, the member from St. Catharines has been a consistent advocate for more for Niagara region. Specifically, he's been a staunch champion to extend GO train service down to Niagara region.

*Applause.*

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I believe that member deserves a very vigorous round of applause for his continued advocacy.

Speaker, the member from Niagara Falls is 100% right in mentioning that on page 71, in fact, of Ontario budget 2016, we say specifically, "Subject to agreement with freight rail partners," we will see "two-way, all-day rail services on the Kitchener and Milton GO corridors, and extension of GO rail service" to both Niagara and Bowmanville.

I would say to the member opposite that the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx will continue to work with the municipalities—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Supplementary?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** For more than two years, I have talked about the importance of expanding GO to Niagara. The Premier herself called it one of her "top priorities" nearly two years ago.

This is important: Expansion of GO train service would have a positive economic impact of \$195 million for Niagara and create 2,400 new full-time jobs in Niagara resulting from transit operations, and 1,200 much-needed additional full-time construction jobs to implement daily GO service.

Without a firm timeline, the municipalities of Niagara region, which are all united behind this project, cannot make plans to take full advantage of the economic benefits GO service expansion will provide. Will you commit today to a timeline for two-way, all-day GO to Niagara Falls? I've already read the budget. Can you commit to the time frame today?



**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Again, I thank the member from Niagara Falls for the question. I certainly look forward to continuing to work with the member from St. Catharines and with all of the municipalities to make sure that we go forward, that we negotiate, that we do the deal that is required in order to make this extension a reality. That's a commitment I'm happy to give that member and every member in this Legislature as it relates to all of the transportation items that are contained in Ontario budget 2016.

I think what's probably most important, if I could be helpful and provide some advice to my friend across the way as he and his colleagues consider budget 2016 in the coming days and weeks: I sincerely hope, because I know he's a champion for Niagara Falls, that he will encourage his leader and his caucus colleagues to support Ontario budget 2016 so that we can deliver on its full promise for the people of Ontario.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Minister, I was pleased to see the budget reaffirm our government's commitment to enhancing retirement security. I know that residents in my riding of Burlington are pleased to see our government taking a leadership role on this issue.

In fact, together with the minister, just last year we hosted a round table in Burlington on the ORPP with local businesses and social planning groups, and, because we are a young Liberal government that is investing in the future of our young people, they were there too. Why is that? Because they care about their future and they are concerned about it.

People in my riding and beyond know how hard it is to save for retirement. They know the world of work is changing and they understand that a number of young workers no longer have access to a workplace pension plan. They want to know that their children and grandchildren will be able to retire with dignity and financial security.

Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has been made a lot of progress in the development of the plan in the past several months. Minister, can you please highlight some of the milestones that the government has achieved on the ORPP?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I want to really thank the fantastic member from Burlington for her hard work on this particular issue in her community. We have made significant progress in our commitment to build a strong and secure retirement income system for the people of Ontario. Our goal is for all Ontario employees to be part of the ORPP or a comparable plan by 2020.

Our government passed the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2015, and the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Administration Corporation Act, 2015. These pieces of legislation lay the foundation for the ORPP and establish the ORPP AC, the arm's-length entity that will administer the plan for the benefit of plan members.

Last fall, we appointed the initial board of directors who will be responsible for the ORPP AC: Susan Wolburgh Jenah, who will serve as chair, Murray Gold and Richard Nesbitt, all bringing unique expertise to the ORPP AC and who will work towards its implementation.

1130

We've also completed our plan design for a contemporary mobile workforce, like the people who live in your community of Burlington.

We're taking important steps forward to ensure that Ontarians can retire with dignity. We want to ensure that future retirees have an opportunity to have a predictable stream of income for life when they retire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Thank you to the minister for her response. My constituents will be pleased to hear about the great work under way to enhance retirement security across Ontario. They will be particularly pleased to hear about the experience and expertise of the initial board of directors. Indeed, we are truly fortunate to have such accomplished individuals overseeing the plan's administration on behalf of all Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, again through you to the minister: I know that last year the minister travelled across the province to get input from business and employees on the plan design details. I understand that, earlier this year, our government finalized the plan's design. I know residents and business owners in my riding are keen to know more about these policy decisions. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please update this House on the policy decisions that our government has released?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you once again to the hard-working member for that question. As the member from Burlington suggests, our government has made important progress on the key design features of the ORPP. Last year, I had an extensive consultation across Ontario, speaking with business, labour, families and individuals in more than 10 communities across the province.

In August 2015, our government announced some of the key design details of the ORPP, including plan comparability, phasing in of contribution rates, staged implementation and setting a minimum earnings threshold. Our plan design was confirmed last month, including but not limited to details about funding policy, survivor benefits and the definition of Ontario employment.

Moving forward, we are working with members of our recently established business implementation advisory group to exchange information and knowledge with the business community as the ORPP is implemented for January 2017, when enrolment—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

#### MUNICIPAL FINANCES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Acting Premier. The township of Frontenac Islands opened their annual OPP policing bill this year to find out that it was \$26,000 higher than normal. The OPP told them that it

was because they had to police wind turbines. Under the OPP's new billing model, municipalities are now being charged a base service cost for wind turbine property. How does the Deputy Premier expect municipalities to bear this cost?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. The member opposite makes reference to some of the challenges that municipalities in rural communities face as a result of a lack of predictable funding. Certainly, our government recognizes that. It's why we have increased more funding for those communities. In fact, we tripled our funding for infrastructure and supports from \$100 million to \$300 million.

In regard to some of the assessments, that is ongoing right now, and we're going to be working closely with them as we proceed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Again, back to the Deputy Premier: I know they increased the debt; he did not need to tell us that.

Many municipalities were unaware of this added cost. Now municipalities' hands seem tied because they can't stop the construction of these approved projects. Many of the municipalities were forced to take these turbines and feel disrespected by this Liberal government. They can't afford this added cost for policing. Municipalities that are stuck with the added cost want to know: What is this government going to do about it?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** This budget goes a long way to provide more support for those municipalities, unlike the member opposite and his government; they actually downloaded and costed more for those communities. That download provided a tremendous amount of pressure.

Mr. Speaker, what they want is predictable funding. What they need is support. What they need is to ensure that we go forward with the programs that we have for infrastructure. That is very clear in this budget. Many of the municipalities have come back citing how pleased they are by the support that we're giving them in this budget: \$160 billion over the next 12 years to support municipalities like the one he's mentioning. We will be there. We'll do what's necessary to facilitate the infrastructure and, ultimately, the revenue that municipality will generate as a result.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, in Hamilton, staff and their supporters rallied outside St. Joe's hospital, where it has been announced that 136 jobs, including 61 RNs, will be cut. We know that patients pay the price when front-line staff are cut from hospitals.

I've heard from constituents who are hearing that mental health and addictions programs are being cut—programs that saved lives. It is disgraceful that this government is cutting front-line health care workers when vulnerable people are already being underserved.

Just yesterday, we learned that Hamilton Health Sciences is considering closing a hospital.

I've heard from seniors who are languishing on wait lists for access to care and from patients who are concerned about how long it's taking to get their kids access to specialized care. This government is failing the basics and the fundamentals.

Speaker, when will this minister stop the cuts to health care in Hamilton and across this province?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The budget of 2016, of course, adds an additional, new \$1 billion to the health care budget, for a total of almost \$52 billion.

There's one issue specifically that I need to address, and that's her comment about the comments in papers in Hamilton that Hamilton Health Sciences is somehow thinking of closing a hospital. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. There was a consultation and a public discussion about what health care in Hamilton might look like 10 or 20 or 30 years down the road and changes that might be necessary to provide care closer to where people are, close to home, close to where people need those services. We invest in Hamilton Health Sciences. We invest in that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Hamilton Mountain. There's a vote in about 60 seconds.

### ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon on a point of order.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Pursuant to standing order 99(d), I have not received an answer to my question tabled on November 5 to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. I ask for your assistance in getting that answered.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** For the members—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Can I proceed? You've been good today.

The table is in the process of indicating that, and if that turns out to be the case, I'll defer to the minister or the deputy House leader for a response for you.

On the same point of order?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'd be glad to look into this matter and have the questions answered expeditiously for the member who has made that request.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I indicated that the table still has to check first to see if it is due, but if it is then we've now taken care of that.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry on a point of order.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I just want to take this opportunity to welcome a friend and staff member, Marcel Lapierre, from our office, along with his wife, Sue; son Rick; and a friend from Sydney, Australia, Jen Williams. Welcome to Queen's Park.



**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Attorney General on a point of order.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Monsieur le Président, si vous me donnez l'opportunité, j'aimerais présenter le président-directeur général de l'Hôpital Montfort, le D<sup>r</sup> Bernard Leduc. L'Hôpital Montfort est mon alma mater.

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup. Bienvenue.

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to introduce my friend and a friend of many in the Legislature, Mr. Courtney Betty, in the east gallery today.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### TIME ALLOCATION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have a deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for allocation of time on Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On March 1, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 62. Mr. Yakabuski then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

"That the second, third and fourth bullets"—

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispensed.

We are now dealing with Mr. Yakabuski's amendment to the motion.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville  
Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Baker, Yvan  
Ballard, Chris  
Barrett, Toby  
Berardinetti, Lorenzo  
Bradley, James J.  
Brown, Patrick  
Chan, Michael  
Chiarelli, Bob  
Clark, Steve  
Coe, Lorne  
Colle, Mike  
Coteau, Michael  
Crack, Grant  
Damerla, Dipika  
Del Duca, Steven  
Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Dickson, Joe  
Dong, Han  
Duguid, Brad  
Fedeli, Victor  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fraser, John  
Hardeman, Ernie  
Harris, Michael  
Hillier, Randy  
Hoggarth, Ann  
Hoskins, Eric  
Hudak, Tim  
Hunter, Mitzie  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jones, Sylvia  
Kiwala, Sophie  
Lalonde, Marie-France  
Leal, Jeff  
MacCharles, Tracy  
MacLaren, Jack  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Malhi, Harinder  
Martins, Cristina  
Martow, Gila  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McDonell, Jim  
McGarry, Kathryn  
McMahon, Eleanor  
McMeekin, Ted  
McNaughton, Monte

Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milczyn, Peter Z.  
Miller, Norm  
Moridi, Reza  
Munro, Julia  
Naidoo-Harris, Indira  
Nicholls, Rick  
Oraziotti, David  
Pettapiece, Randy  
Potts, Arthur  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Scott, Laurie  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Todd  
Sousa, Charles  
Thompson, Lisa M.  
Vernile, Daiene  
Walker, Bill  
Wilson, Jim  
Wong, Soo  
Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

### Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.  
Bisson, Gilles  
Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy  
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne  
Gretzky, Lisa  
Hatfield, Percy  
Mantha, Michael  
Miller, Paul

Sattler, Peggy  
Singh, Jagmeet  
Tabuns, Peter  
Taylor, Monique  
Vanthof, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 77; the nays are 15.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the amendment carried.

Are the members ready to vote on the main motion?

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 62. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 77; the nays are 15.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion, as amended, agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1149 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It's my absolute pleasure today to introduce my longest friend, Andrea Lloyd, in the members' east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I am delighted to introduce my new legislative assistant, Cameron Alderdice, who comes from the Oshawa area. Welcome, Cameron.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I also wanted to introduce Christina Bisanz in the members' east gallery. She's a councillor for—Aurora?

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Newmarket.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Newmarket. I got that right. Thank you. Welcome.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** The rising cost of electricity in Ontario continues to be of grave concern in my riding. The township of Calvin recently passed a resolution

supporting the township of Wainfleet in requesting that an RFP for added wind generation there be cancelled.

The leaders in Calvin note that the Auditor General's most recent report showed that Ontario power consumers pay a premium of \$9.2 billion for renewable power, with wind power pricing that is double the prices paid in other jurisdictions. They also note that Ontario continues to generate surplus activity and that wind power is an intermittent source of generation that can't be used to replace dependable generating capacity.

As a result, Calvin township resolves that the province exercise its right in section 4.13(12) of the current LRP/RFP to "cancel the process at any stage and for any reason" and not issue any new wind generation contracts.

They also ask the province to hold off on any further renewable procurement until capacity is needed, and that the IESO review outstanding FIT contracts that haven't achieved "commercial operation" and vigorously enforce FIT contract terms.

Affordable energy may be a fantasy to this government, but it's something Ontarians deserve and expect.

#### DRIVER LICENCES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I rise today to talk about Roy Dixon, a 79-year-old senior in my riding of Welland, and the many seniors across the province whose lives are being made unnecessarily difficult by this government.

Roy dutifully receives an eye exam with an optometrist once per year. Three months ago, after his last exam, his optometrist reported him to MTO after his test supposedly showed that he was a hazard on the road. MTO suspended his licence.

Roy is a fixed-income senior. He paid \$100 for a second opinion from an ophthalmologist who cleared his vision. But before reinstating his licence, he had to do not only a formal driving evaluation but, worse, pay \$675 to do it.

To be clear, Roy was forced to pay \$800 in fees to occupational therapists and ophthalmologists to disprove the initial assessment and to try to get his licence back after almost a year without it. Roy deserves better; Ontario seniors deserve better.

It's unacceptable for us to be making life unnecessarily difficult for our seniors, forcing them to pay hundreds of dollars to prove what a medical professional had already confirmed. I urge all members of this House to give our seniors the respect they deserve and to stop their unfair gouging and unnecessary red tape.

#### GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES FAIR

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Today I rise to say thank you to a group of people and organizations that are making a difference in my community of Etobicoke Centre. Every day as MPPs, we hear from constituents who need our help. Sometimes we or our staff can assist them, but often we connect them with government agencies or

community organizations that can offer them the support that they need.

Community agencies are often run and funded by volunteers, and they provide assistance daily to all of our constituents, including my own, and they are fundamental to the quality of life in Etobicoke Centre. Although these organizations offer a lot of useful services, many constituents are unaware of them and therefore can't always access the help that they need when they need it. We can all think of instances when constituents in our respective communities have reached out to our constituency office to ask us in assisting them in finding local organizations or elements of the government that can actually serve their specific needs.

That is why, a couple of weeks ago, I, alongside my colleague from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, organized the annual government and community services fair at Cloverdale Mall in Etobicoke. The fair created a space for 112 exhibitors, consisting of community service organizations and government agencies, to showcase the services that they offer. We managed to attract over 3,000 members of the Etobicoke community again this year. The fair allowed my constituents to learn more about the services that these wonderful organizations deliver and ask questions of staff and volunteers.

I rise in the House today, Speaker, to thank the 112 exhibitors from the community organizations, not only for participating in the fair but for dedicating themselves to serving my constituents, for making our community a better place to live, and for making a difference in Etobicoke Centre every single day.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The leadership of our medical officers of health and the programs provided by our boards of health and public health units demonstrate a focus on health, not just health care. This is essential, because Ontario needs a wellness agenda which promotes illness prevention and keeping people healthy, not just caring for the sick.

The Ministry of Health has frozen funding for cost-shared mandatory public health programs, as well as fully funded programs. Health units are being forced to do more with less and reduce staffing. This should concern all of us in this House.

The Minister of Health needs to listen to our public health officials. In addition to expressing concern about funding challenges, they're also responding to his Patients First discussion paper. The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health board chair, Doug Auld, has written an excellent letter to the minister with constructive feedback on the discussion paper, raising the need for co-operation, collaboration, recognition of local communities' unique needs, accountability, appropriate alignment of LHIN boundaries and dedicated funding.

I've also heard similar concerns from the region of Halton. In particular, they've emphasized the need for appropriate alignment of LHIN boundaries and consoli-



dating the entire region into one LHIN area. They also stress the importance of ensuring that there is sufficient funding from the province to enable them to continue to provide the public health services that our residents need.

Now that the minister has concluded his consultation process on Patients First, I urge him to pay close attention to the recommendations of our public health officials and to remember Ben Franklin's old saying: "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

## EASTER

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Like everyone in this House, I annually honour all places of worship, whether they are Tamil, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish or Ismaili, just to name a few, including ceremonies of Thai Pongal; Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan; Holi and Diwali; and Yom Kippur, Passover and Rosh Hashanah.

This month, Christians will celebrate Easter, the most important observance in their faith, celebrated worldwide by almost two billion Christians. This important religious observance is preceded by Lent, which began on Ash Wednesday. I attended the Ash Wednesday service and Mass this past February 10, and received ashes on my forehead, to begin the Easter holy season.

March 25 marks Good Friday and commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and his death at Calvary, with Mother Mary at his feet as he died. Good Friday represents the sacrifices and suffering in Jesus's life and the selfless acts from a man free from sin to save those full of sin. They also placed a crown of thorns on his head, causing further pain, and also pierced his side with a lance, ensuring his death.

The crucifixion is the culmination of a number of events during Holy Week, including the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday, which will be celebrated on March 27, two days following the crucifixion, and his ascension into heaven 40 days later.

Holy Week, including the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, is observed throughout the Christian world, and Catholics in Ontario alone will pray in some 30 languages on Easter weekend.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S ONTARIO HERITAGE AWARDS

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I rise today to recognize a number of fine constituents from my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound who were awarded Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards on February 26.

Long-time volunteer Bob Alexander was presented the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Ontario Heritage Trust for his 27 years of volunteering with the Grey Roots Museum and Archives.

1510

After working as a mechanic and serving in the Canadian army and in Korea, Alexander retired and, in 1987, began volunteering with the former county of Grey and

city of Owen Sound museum, helping them acquire a collection of classic automobiles and restoring them to their former glory. Alexander's most significant project was building the Bluewater Garage in the museum's Heritage Village and then moving it to its new site near Rockford.

Grey Roots, who nominated Alexander for the award, said it was his "devotion, creativity and vision over the last 27 years" that helped save some significant aspects of Grey county's history, including military memorabilia. Alexander is currently busy restoring a 1943 Ford Canadian Military Pattern truck used by soldiers in the Second World War and has no plans to stop volunteering.

Melanie Pledger, who is another Owen Sound native and a student of OSCVI, was also honoured, receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement as well as a \$2,000 Young Heritage Leaders scholarship for her work documenting the lives of local soldiers who served in the First and Second World Wars. It is no surprise that this 19-year-old student aspires to work as a museum archivist one day.

Finally, members of the local Community Waterfront Heritage Centre were recognized for excellence in conservation for the preservation of the Owen Sound Marine and Rail Museum. The CWHC was formed to save the Marine and Rail Museum, which it currently operates in the city-owned former Canadian National Railway station. As part of this effort, I'd like to recognize the team members who made it happen: Richard Thomas, Jan Chamberlain, Wayne King, Linda Droine, Wendy Tomlinson, and also Jeff Robins, Ron O'Donoghue, Doris Fraser, Maryann Thomas and Paula Niall.

## SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE WORD

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Last Friday, I met with several constituents in my riding who wanted to bring more local awareness to the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. The word begins with "R" and can be used in a derogatory way to describe people who have intellectual disabilities.

I would like to thank Kayla Marwick, Kevin Bond, Dan Lavigne, Trent Matton, Dwight Guppy and Lyne Marwick for taking the time to explain the pain that can be caused by the derogatory use of that word on those with disabilities and their families and friends. It was a heartwarming meeting, and I was inspired not only by the passion for and knowledge of the issue, but by the commitment to change the community for the better. Many of us could learn from the example this group has shown. When asked if there were others who had helped the local effort, they identified Deandra Basky, Betty Stone and Flo Bruneau.

March 2 is the eighth annual Spread the Word to End the Word Day. Although the movement is closely associated with the Special Olympics, the ultimate goal is to eliminate the stigma that continues to impact people

throughout society because of the R-word. I couldn't find a more appropriate day, then, to recite the pledge we all feel in our hearts, and I'd like to take the time to recite it: "I pledge and support the elimination of the derogatory use of the R-word from everyday speech and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities."

## FAMILY DAY JOUR DE LA FAMILLE

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** This past Family Day, I was proud to host my second annual Family Day event in Orléans. It was the perfect time to provide an opportunity for families to come together to have fun and to engage with each other. So this year, we went bowling at the Orléans Bowling Center. We had the entire venue for a couple of hours in the morning, where people could come and bowl for free.

Thank you to the team at the bowling centre: owners Roch Henry and Jonathan Piché, as well as their amazing staff, Cormac and Mike, who collaborated with us to make this event a success.

I also would like to thank the great community of Orléans, all the families that joined us, and our federal MP, Andrew Leslie. It was truly wonderful to see and meet three generations—grandparents, parents and their children—all together as they joined in the fun activities. We had an amazing turnout of more than 200 people.

Les résidents de ma communauté ont répondu à l'appel en grand nombre et ont pu partager de beaux moments en famille. J'aimerais prendre l'opportunité de remercier les membres du personnel de mon bureau, spécialement Anick, Maryam et Nathalie, pour leur aide exceptionnelle lors de ce grand événement.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** International Women's Day will be celebrated March 8 around the globe. This year's theme is "Pledge for Parity," with the objective of "Planet 50-50 by 2030."

In my own community, the Cambridge Soroptimists are very active and volunteer many hours to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

Recently, I joined them to celebrate this year's Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women event. This award is given to women with dependants who are in financial need and are enrolled in post-secondary educational or vocational training to achieve their dream of a better life, through education. I was pleased to witness Amanda Rice and Mary Gay receive their awards. It was a proud moment for all.

On March 5, the Canadian Federation of University Women in Cambridge will again host a breakfast for the community to celebrate International Women's Day. The guest speaker is Lynn Spence, a well-known TV personality from Cityline. The Cambridge Soroptimists

support this event and have organized the second annual flash mob following the breakfast, taking the message "Pledge for Parity" to the streets of downtown Cambridge. I will be glad to join these women on the streets, carrying the sign that says, "Many Women. One Goal. Creating a Better World for Women and Girls." Thank you to Yvonne Kaine, Dr. Jean Skillman, Merrily Walker, Alison Sanders, Dianne Long and all the Soroptimist volunteers for helping to do just that.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr34, An Act to revive Bill Bedford Professional Corporation;

Bill 36, An Act to revive 839255 Ontario Inc.;

Bill Pr37, An Act to revive Base2 eBusiness Solutions Inc.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF HURON SHORES AND THESSALON FIRST NATION ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2016

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr38, An Act respecting the Corporation of the Municipality of Huron Shores and the Thessalon First Nation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** "Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and



"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

1520

I agree with the content of this petition, and I will sign it and date it today.

### WAY-FINDING SIGNS

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My petition is titled, "For way-finding signs on MTO roads in northern Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the MTO currently does not allow established trail way-finding signs on MTO highways, and way-finding signs are helpful in guiding cyclists in northern Ontario where we often have no other options than using MTO roads;

"Whereas cycling tourism has become a significant part of Manitoulin's tourist economy, with an established network of cycling routes, many of which cannot be done without travelling on portions of MTO highways;

"Whereas Manitoulin's economic development hinges on making tourists feel welcome and safe;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow way-finding signs on MTO roads in northern Ontario and to immediately allow a pilot project of way-finding signs on MTO road sections of cycling routes found in MICA's Manitoulin Island and LaCloche Mountains Cycling Routes and Road Map."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Andrew to bring it down to the table.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is

estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee ... and to immediately seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this, affix my signature and give it to page Julia to bring to the table.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Todd Smith:** "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I agree with this, sign it and send it to the table with page Jordan.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

Thank you very much.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there are critical transportation infrastructure needs for the province;

"Whereas giving people multiple avenues for their transportation needs takes cars off the road;

"Whereas public transit increases the quality of life for Ontarians and helps the environment;

"Whereas the constituents of Orléans and east Ottawa are in need of greater transportation infrastructure;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Support the Moving Ontario Forward plan and the Ottawa LRT phase II construction, which will help address the critical transportation infrastructure needs of Orléans, east Ottawa and" our wonderful province of Ontario.

It gives me great pleasure to affix my signature and give it to page Tristan.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the price of electricity has skyrocketed under the Ontario Liberal government;

"Whereas ever-higher hydro bills are a huge concern for everyone in the province, especially seniors and others on fixed incomes, who can't afford to pay more;

"Whereas Ontario's businesses say high electricity costs are making them uncompetitive, and have contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs;

"Whereas the recent Auditor General's report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years if nothing changes;

"Whereas the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss, the debt retirement charge, the global adjustment and smart meters that haven't met their conservation targets have all put upward pressure on hydro bills;

"Whereas the sale of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and will likely only lead to even higher hydro bills;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To listen to Ontarians, reverse course on the Liberal government's current hydro policies and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills."

I support this petition and have also affixed my signature.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** "Hydro One Not for Sale! Say No to Privatization.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I support this petition, and I'll sign it.

#### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. This petition comes from residents of Welland. I've had petitions come in from Ontarians all over the province.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41," speed it through committee and "immediately seek royal assent upon its passage."

I agree with the petition, sign my name and send it down to the table with Charlotte.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and



"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

1530

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care that Ontario's families deserve."

Speaker, I agree with this petition, will sign it and give it to page Owen.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Sault Area Hospital is facing major direct care cuts, including: the closure of acute care beds and cuts to more than 59,000 nursing and direct patient care hours per year from departments across the hospital, including the operating room, the intensive care unit, oncology, surgical, hemodialysis, infection control as well as patient care coordinators, personal support workers and others ;

"Whereas Ontario's provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row; and

"Whereas these cuts will risk higher medical accident rates as nursing and direct patient care hours are dramatically cut and will reduce levels of care all across our hospital;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Stop the proposed cuts to the Sault Area Hospital and protect the beds and services;

"(2) Improve overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Julia to bring down to the Clerks' table.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs

the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this, will affix my signature and give it to page Suzanne.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I approve of this petition, sign it and give it to page Xavier.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

JOBS FOR TODAY  
AND TOMORROW ACT (BUDGET  
MEASURES), 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT LA CRÉATION  
D'EMPLOIS POUR AUJOURD'HUI  
ET DEMAIN (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 29, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 173, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend various statutes / *Projet de loi 173, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Speaker, I'll be sharing my time today with the member for Halton, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the member for Cambridge. I'm delighted to rise in the House today to speak to this conversation on Ontario's 2016 budget, on behalf of the citizens of my riding of Burlington.

Our budget is a commitment for our government to stay the course we mapped out in 2014 and to move forward with our four-part plan to invest in people's talents and skills, create a dynamic and supportive business environment, invest in public infrastructure and build a secure retirement; all while committing to our path to balance, which will see us eliminate the deficit by next year—a remarkable achievement.

Ontario is delivering on its number one priority: to grow the economy and create jobs through unprecedented investments in public infrastructure, increasing the competitiveness of our businesses and taking action in the transition to a low-carbon economy, while at the same time encouraging the very innovation inherent in the number one challenge facing humanity.

At the same time, we must ensure that we are meeting the challenge head-on, and are also seizing the opportunities that come with it. Why is that? Because our government believes in the innovative capacity of Ontarians, of businesses and of entrepreneurs. This budget seeks to harness their knowledge, skills and abilities, which will not only enhance job creation, but also build on our efforts to make Ontario a global leader in sustainable technology and innovation, while fostering the kind of business climate that will encourage the leaders of tomorrow to remain right here in Ontario.

Companies like Terrapure Environmental in my riding of Burlington are a great example of this. Relying on a highly skilled workforce, Terrapure develops innovative, cost-effective solutions to environmental challenges facing key industry sectors, helping businesses become more sustainable while supporting Ontario's transition to a low-carbon economy. Further, as a national company that operates in regions of the country that have put a price on carbon—notably, BC and Quebec—Terrapure is benefiting from its investments and innovation, and consequently from the cap-and-trade marketplace, as so many other Canadian companies are and will continue to do.

In my riding of Burlington, we have a nexus of small and medium-sized advanced manufacturers who rely on a highly skilled workforce. We know that seven out of 10 new jobs in Canada will be in highly skilled or management occupations which require higher education or specialized skills. That's why our government is transforming student financial assistance to make college and university tuition free for students with financial need

from families with incomes of \$50,000 or lower. We're also making tuition more affordable for middle-class families, because this will broaden access to public education and fulfill the hopes and dreams of thousands of Ontarians.

In terms of creating a dynamic business environment, through the Business Growth Initiative, this budget makes significant investments to create a more highly skilled workforce, support world-class research at Ontario's post-secondary institutions and provide significant support for innovation, research and development, so that we can shorten the distance between innovative ideas and commercialization.

We're also supporting competitiveness and job creation in key industry sectors, by partnering with colleges to establish a \$20-million fund to be invested over three years. This fund will better connect colleges and Ontario companies on applied research projects that result in breakthrough products and services for sale at home and abroad. I know this kind of investment pays dividends; I see it already in my riding.

We know that companies in Ontario operate in a global environment, and that keeping pace with other jurisdictions means enhancing the access to technology, particularly for our advanced manufacturers, a good number of which we have in Burlington. As a consequence, our government is supporting the development of these kinds of innovative technologies through a \$35-million investment over the next five years that will establish a \$50-million partnership in an advanced manufacturing consortium. This academic collaboration, with three leading Ontario universities—McMaster, Waterloo and Western—will focus on long-term industrial innovation projects to make Ontario a leader in fields like additive manufacturing and digital components and devices.

Investments like these are helping Ontario prepare for and contribute to a rapidly growing tide of disruptive technological innovations that are bringing significant and permanent change to the global economy.

**1540**

Our government is preparing for tomorrow, starting today. This budget demonstrates how the four pillars of our plan are working together to establish conditions for a growing economy, well-paid jobs and a higher standard of living for all Ontarians. Together, we are building Ontario up, and I urge all members of this House to join us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Member from Halton.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon to Bill 173, the Budget Measures Act.

This budget is a plan for today, tomorrow and the future of Ontario. It's a budget that will touch the lives of the young, the old and those in need. It will have a significant impact on the everyday lives of Ontario residents. That's because it's a plan that will support our economy, provide jobs and build our communities; but



most importantly, it's a plan for people, one that has compassion and yet works to eliminate the deficit.

When Minister Sousa announced last week that Ontario will offer free tuition to low-income families, the reaction was instant. In fact, the announcement went viral, with young people all around the province tweeting the information out to Ontario and around the country.

The Canadian Federation of Students said it was "an affirmation that government has taken student concerns and suggestions seriously."

The Council of Ontario Universities says it will "encourage greater participation in post-secondary education."

Starting in 2017-18, the new Ontario Student Grant will offer free tuition for students with financial need from families with incomes of \$50,000 or less. But it doesn't end there. Tuition will be more affordable for middle-income families as well. More than 50% of students from families with incomes of \$83,000 or less will receive non-repayable grants in excess of average tuition.

Our government understands the importance of making sure that access to quality education is fair to all Ontario students. I know a little bit about unequal access, since the country I was born in didn't grant fair and equal access to education.

Education pulls us all up. It's a gift that keeps on giving, and no one can take this gift away from us. This is an investment in our youth, new immigrants, mature students and families. Eventually, as these students graduate and enter the workforce, it will translate into a more prosperous province.

On that note, I want to point out the continued progress we are making on job creation. People are concerned about the economy and how it could affect their family and friends. They're concerned that we are living in uncertain economic times, in a fragile economy, so they want to know that their government is taking care of their interests and their future, which is why Ontario's number one priority is growing the economy and creating jobs.

Let me tell you, Ontario is on track. Ontario is on track to create more than 300,000 net new jobs by 2019. That's 300,000 jobs, bringing total job creation to more than 900,000 jobs since the recessionary low in 2009. In addition, our unemployment rate continues to be below the national average.

Knowing how important it is to keep people working and keep Ontario competitive, the government is committing to \$400 million over the next five years to the Business Growth Initiative. This will modernize business regulations, lower business costs and make more Ontario firms into global industry leaders. Just think about that. I just returned from a trade mission to India. What this means is that this is going to open doors for us and for Ontario businesses around the world, and that impacts on all of us.

The 2016 budget also makes critical investments in the health and the wellness of Ontario residents. Hospitals

are at the heart of every community. It's where we go when our babies are born, when we are hurt and scared, and even when we have to say goodbye to loved ones. That's why, for the first time in five years, hospitals are getting more money, a funding increase of \$345 million. That's fantastic news. In my riding of Halton we are served by four hospitals, and this funding is great news for them.

Our government also knows how important it is to give more patients the option of staying home when they are sick or injured. This is something I hear almost every day. That's why Ontario is investing an additional—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It's pretty loud over there. There's five people talking.

Continue.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

That's why Ontario is investing an additional \$250 million to make more care available at home and in the community. As our aging population grows rapidly, it's vital that we start planning for it now. This budget adds an additional \$75 million over the next three years in community-based residential hospice and palliative care. I know this is an initiative that matters to my constituents.

We're also making hospital parking more affordable and reducing surgery wait times. And the budget proposes making the shingles vaccine free—free—for seniors who are eligible.

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you.

This would save about \$170 for our elderly and reduce emergency and hospital visits.

Ontario hospitals will also benefit from major infrastructure funding. The government is now investing \$160 billion over 12 years, starting in 2014-15. This is the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history. This budget makes historic investments, Mr. Speaker. That money will be funneled into Ontario hospitals along with schools, roads, bridges and public transit.

My riding of Halton is an excellent example of why this infrastructure money is so important. The Halton region is one of Canada's fastest-growing areas, and it's important we keep people moving and provide them with the services and facilities they need. In fact, I'm pleased the budget includes additional GO train service in Milton and I'm glad to hear that the Ontario government is committed to working with freight rail companies to provide two-way, all-day rail services on the Milton GO line.

Families will also be happy to know that the budget includes \$333 million over five years to redesign and consolidate autism services in Ontario.

To support the goal of ending homelessness, an additional \$178 million will be put into affordable housing over the next three years. I know this is an important announcement.

Mr. Speaker, there is something for everyone—everyone—in this budget: for youth, for seniors, for indigenous people, for middle- and low-income families. I like to think of this budget as a budget for people—it's Ontario's people's budget.

The investments are significant, but with a firm plan toward eliminating the deficit and balancing the budget in 2017-18. It will keep people moving, keep people working and give them more time with their families.

This budget is an investment in the people of Ontario. I am proud to be a member of this government and I support Bill 173.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister for Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I'm delighted to rise in support of Bill 173, our budget measures act. Following up on the member from Halton, I will be focusing my remarks on the people of Ontario, including, and especially, those who are incredibly vulnerable in our society.

This is why we have introduced our income security reform action plan; because over the past year our government has heard from stakeholders about the need to broaden discussions on the reform of social assistance rates to include aspects of the wider income security system. And we've listened. The province will be engaging stakeholders in the coming year on developing an action plan for more comprehensive reform. We're going to be engaging with First Nations, Inuit and Métis nations to ensure that the consultation is an inclusive process that recognizes the unique experiences of all Ontarians.

So, an idea that has been around for some time and has been gathering a lot of interest both here and abroad is a basic-income pilot project that we will be entering into. We're going to be designing it over the next year. It'll require a great deal of thought. We're going to be building this action plan to reform our income security system for vulnerable Ontarians, and this basic income pilot will be one aspect of the research to inform that plan.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

1550

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** I would have expected all members of the House to be extremely interested in this.

We will testing the potential of a basic income to determine if it will provide more consistent support to clients, streamline the delivery of income support and achieve savings in other areas, such as health and housing supports. We're going to be having conversations with other levels of government, and we're going to work with communities, researchers and our stakeholders over 2016 to determine the best approach.

This is being recognized by many of our stakeholders. I was delighted to hear from Jennefer Laidley of the Income Security Advocacy Centre. As she said, and I quote directly from her statement, "The change in focus signals a reset on social assistance reform.... With improvements to ODSP medical reviews, the minister has demonstrated a willingness to work with community and

respond positively to community recommendations. In that spirit, we look forward to working with the ministry over the next year on comprehensive reforms to the system."

When it comes to child support and social assistance, we know that children in single-parent families are disproportionately and more profoundly affected by poverty. As part of our commitment to combat child poverty, the Ontario government will end the full clawback of child support for social assistance recipients.

Currently, families receiving child support have their social benefits reduced by the full amount of child support they receive. This means that families on social assistance are no better off when they receive child support, and the parent responsible for making child support payments may feel little incentive to pay. We will be working over the next year to ensure that this happens in that time period.

Again, a commendation from Mary Birdsell, vice-chair of the Ontario Bar Association's child and youth law section: "Ending the full clawback of child support from single parents receiving social assistance is a significant contribution to the wellbeing of children and vulnerable families in Ontario. It is a move that will contribute to the reduction of child poverty. The government's commitment encourages the parent responsible for making support payments to do so, because children will have the benefit of the support that's intended for them."

Unfortunately, I've come to the end of my time. So much good news in this budget; so little time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Cambridge.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It's a pleasure to rise today to provide my comments, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge, to this wonderful debate in support of Bill 173.

A couple of things that I really wanted to point out: One is the ongoing commitment of this government to understand how important public transit is to managing congestion, connecting people to jobs and building communities, and their ongoing commitment in this budget to ensure that we are continuing on these transit investments. This is a plan, Speaker, that will invest \$13.5 billion in improvements across the GO Transit network to both increase ridership and reduce travel times.

I was very proud to see, on page 71 of the budget, that there's a section in there that talks about new and improved GO bus connections to the GO rail network for Cambridge and the Brantford communities. This means, as our government continues their ongoing dialogue with CN and CP, who are owners of parts of the track not only on the Kitchener corridor line but also on the Milton line—in order to be able to acquire and work with these communities to make sure we can deliver not only on our two-way, all-day service commitment, but also to be able to hopefully expand out to these areas sooner rather than later. As I said, we'll be continuing to find new ways to work with CN, who owns a portion of the Kitchener line, to complete that.



The other piece of the budget that I was really pleased to see was our ongoing commitment to health care, having a \$1-billion increase in the budget to manage our health care system over the next few years. I wanted to specifically point out, on page 80, that the government has an ongoing commitment to ensure that Cambridge Memorial Hospital will continue its expansion and improvements in order to be able to better serve our communities of Cambridge and North Dumfries township. I was very pleased, too, to see another \$130 million coming forward for cancer care. Certainly people in my community are well served by the cancer specialists in Cambridge Memorial Hospital, so I'm very pleased to see that ongoing level of commitment.

There's lots more to say. I support the budget, Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I'd like to make two points in the two minutes that I've been given.

We heard a few minutes ago that this government's number one priority was jobs and that "Ontario is on track." But when you look at the 2015 budget, the government forecasted the creation of 78,000 jobs this year, but this year's budget has dropped it down to 46,000 jobs. That's down 32,000. Their own forecast tells us that they're not on track, which is quite opposite of what the member just said. In fact, if you look at last year's budget, they said that next year they would create 93,000. This year they said, oops, it's really only 78,000, down another 15,000 jobs. The next year it's 99,000, again another oops: They are down to 93,000, down another 6,000 jobs. Speaker, I can add these together and we can see over 50,000 fewer jobs forecasted than they forecasted only a year ago.

So they are not on track, and they are not on track with their deficit either. Yes, they came up with a fake number. The Financial Accountability Officer showed us. Last year, he said they were overstating their revenue projections for each year, and he encouraged the government to adjust their revenue projections to reflect this lack of revenue. Instead, they actually amped up their revenue projections, but it's all from one-time money. It's from the sale of Hydro One, from the cap-and-trade revenue and from other revenue that is merely one-time money. They have not met the revenue projections at all, and we are going to be faced with a severe hole in their budget come the election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm pleased to rise on Bill 173. It's interesting that the Liberals would say it's a budget for the people. Then I guess my question to the Liberals is, why are you attacking seniors? Why are seniors going to see their drug costs nearly double? The annual drug benefit deductible will rise up to \$170 from \$100. Co-pays will increase from \$6.11 to \$7.11. We talk about how you're supposed to make it better for seniors. Nothing is in this budget, again.

Talk about the rising cost of food for our seniors—the fastest-growing users of food banks today are seniors.

Rising costs of hydro—they can't afford to turn on their lights. There's nothing here. And what are you doing? Member after member on your side is standing up and supporting the sale of Hydro, knowing full well it is hurting seniors from one part of this province right to the other—doing nothing about it.

The rising costs of medication—this is really interesting. You're fighting with doctors. Think about that. You're fighting with doctors, yet you are giving Hydro executives millions and millions of dollars in bonuses and salaries. Does that make sense to anybody? I don't think so.

You're closing hospital beds. Now, mind you, this is the budget for the people. You're closing hospital beds. You're cutting nurses right across the community; 1,200 nurses have lost their jobs. The one that I thought was really interesting was when one of the members over there talked about services in hospitals. I can tell you, in Niagara, we closed the Fort Erie hospital. We closed the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital. We closed two hospitals in St. Catharines, in Jim Bradley's own riding. We closed those hospitals.

What was interesting to me was that, in Niagara Falls, we took a service away. You know what service they took away, Mr. Speaker? People come to Niagara Falls to make babies. They took away—we can't deliver babies in Niagara Falls; they took away the maternity. Does that make any sense?

That's cuts to health care. I'm here all afternoon, and I'm sure I'll speak on it more.

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** Moi, je veux amener une voix francophone à notre budget aujourd'hui. Donc, ça va me faire plaisir de vous parler tous en français pour quelques minutes.

**1600**

Écoutez : on entend beaucoup de choses sur le projet de loi, sur notre cher budget de 2016. Moi, je veux parler un petit peu de ce qu'on va faire quand on parle de l'éducation pour nos jeunes. On parle de coupures sur l'autre côté; nous, on parle de ce qu'on va faire. On va rejoindre tous nos jeunes avec l'investissement massif que nous allons procurer aux jeunes du postsecondaire.

Je veux juste mettre l'accent : on était à La Cité—M<sup>me</sup> la ministre, la procureure générale, mon collègue d'Ottawa-Sud et moi-même—et nous avons annoncé un projet d'infrastructure de plus de 10 millions de dollars pour aider la francophonie à résonner au niveau des affaires, un genre d'incubateur qui va permettre aux étudiants francophones la langue des affaires en français, parce que c'est important de parler français en affaires aussi.

J'aimerais aussi noter, pour les étudiants et les étudiantes de ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans, notre investissement dans leur futur, au niveau du fait qu'on va leur permettre d'aller au collège et à l'université gratuitement.

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Remarquable.

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** Remarquable, oui. Écoutez : avec un revenu annuel de moins de 50 000 \$, l'étudiant qui n'avait jamais pensé aller à l'école va pouvoir penser, avec des bonnes notes, à se rendre au collégial et à l'université.

Je vais vous dire, de façon personnelle : moi, quand j'étais jeune, mes parents ne faisaient pas plus de 50 000 \$. C'est certain que ce n'était pas facile pour moi de penser—j'ai pris des prêts et des prêts et mes parents ne pouvaient pas m'aider.

Monsieur le Président, c'est souvent une histoire que—vous me notez l'heure. Mais, je pense que c'est important qu'on aide nos jeunes à réussir dans la vie. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry: two minutes.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a privilege to rise in this House and to talk about this budget and the cuts that it involves.

They talk about the free tuition; that's just a sham. It's money moved around. We see where students are actually going to receive less money than they used to receive. It's going to cost people more.

What about the families who make a little bit more than \$50,000? That's not a lot of money. No wonder, under this government, we see more and more families making less than \$50,000. I don't know if that's their plan, but it's just more of cuts.

The member from Ottawa–Orléans talked about cuts. There are cuts in francophone affairs; there are cuts in agriculture. These are just some of the ones we're seeing. We're seeing hospital expenses—they talked about a 1% increase, but on the other hand they move money around. They're going to lose it from the lottery funds.

In the end, there are more and more people who are qualifying for these services because, unfortunately, there are fewer jobs out there. There are fewer good-paying jobs. Students in my area are going out west. Alberta has some problems, but they seem to be able to go out there and find employment. They can't find it in Ontario.

Part of looking after students, other than making sure they owe a lot more tomorrow—because what this government has done over the last 10 years is doubled the cost of debt, which means that they're just passing it off to our children and grandchildren. Those are big costs.

I saw the Premier talking about the need to fix the water plants we have in this province—15 years of boil-water orders—but failed to say that this government has been in power for almost all those 15 years. Where is the action over those years to fix these things?

We see lots of needs, but unfortunately, lots of needs are not looked after.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** One of the four speakers has two minutes.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I appreciate the comments that we've heard today from the members from Burlington and Halton, the Minister of Community and Social Services, and the members from Nipissing,

Niagara Falls, Ottawa–Orléans and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

I want to reiterate some of my earlier comments: that I really do appreciate Bill 173, the budget measures act, and the ambitious and bold plan that we've got going forward, not just on one particular sector but on a number of ones. As I said, it's a bold and ambitious plan to move Ontario forward with all the billions and billions of infrastructure investment that we'll be making over the next 10 years.

Many of those projects are already designed and under way, Speaker, including the expansion of the Highway 401 corridor from six to 10 lanes in my own community. We're under way right now between Highway 24 and 8, and in 2018 we'll be looking forward to expanding the 401 again from six to 10 lanes, including an HOV lane, from Highway 24 to Townline Road. That's all moving our goods and services and our community forward.

I want to reiterate my excitement at seeing the health care increase to home and community care, another 5% in the budget, which will really assist people to get the right care at the right time in the right place. Most patients certainly want the care at home.

There are also investments in palliative care that I'm very proud of. I was a founder of the Hospice of Waterloo Region. And under my spouse's leadership, we had the first bricks and mortar hospice in our area, Lisaard House. So I'm very proud of the investments that this government is putting forward to palliative care in the province.

Again, thank you for everybody's comments today. I look forward to further discussion on the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, it's a pleasure to speak to the budget today. I'm sure everybody in the province has been dutifully and diligently reading the budget book. "Few Jobs Today and Even Fewer Tomorrow," I think is how it reads on the cover of the budget.

This government has demonstrated clearly that they can't do anything right. From the subtle to the substantial, this government has been and continues to be a failure in its budgetary outlook and its financial mismanagement of this province.

I was going through the budget and I was really having a difficult time determining what element of the budget I would speak to in my 20-minute allocation. I came across a couple of things.

I want to speak about something that's going on in my riding: The Cordick program is facing closure due to the government's incompetence when it comes to financial matters.

There's something else that came up. In our daily papers today, I came across an article by Jack Mintz. Everybody will be familiar with Jack Mintz, of course, on the Liberal side. Jack Mintz is a renowned economist and professor at the University of Alberta. He spent a lot of time in the early years of the Dalton McGuinty government providing advice and much policy consideration



for the McGuinty government. Jack Mintz wrote an article in today's paper and the title of it is, "Who Really 'Rigs' the System?" I'll just paraphrase a little bit from it.

The Mintz article states that Bernie Sanders has repeated this line in his nomination: that the system has been rigged. Dr. Jack Mintz says that Bernie Sanders does have a point but things are not as simple as he portrays.

"What he should be railing against is politicians seeking power by bribing their base with free gifts from the government. If anyone is rigging the system, it is the vote-maximizing politician who achieves power with favours funded by others." That comment struck me clearly as from the Liberal government.

Jack Mintz goes on to say, "And, of course, politicians rig the system by shifting the tax burden of spending giveaways to future generations through higher deficits. Future taxpayers can't vote, so they matter little to politicians today." That's another spot-on comment by Jack Mintz when it comes to this Liberal government.

He goes on to talk about the "breathtaking list of subsidies for venture capitalists, automakers, renewable energy companies and financial businesses."

He goes on to state that the new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will be a new tax for everyone except unionized employees. "The ORPP benefits are least for the lowest-income groups" in Ontario. That's pretty powerful stuff coming from such a renowned economist and former adviser to the Ontario Liberal Party.

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He also goes on to say, "The most important rigging by Ontario politicians is the debt that must be paid back by future citizens. With some hocus-pocus, including counting one-time asset sales as revenue...." Hocus-pocus: That's what the budget is.

Anyway, Jack Mintz concludes his column in today's paper with the statement, "Sanders is right. The system is rigged." He also went on to explain who has rigged the system, and it's the government opposite of us. Important—I hope more people read and see what Jack Mintz has written about.

I want to just give a couple of other indications—just some proof points about the Jack Mintz article. One of the most important ones is found on page 286 of the budget. If you go to page 286—and I know some of the Liberal members will have it—there's an interesting financial table in there. Since 2008, per capita incomes have gone up in Ontario by 16%. Over the same period of time, the per capita debt that the government has accumulated has gone up by 44%. Wages have gone up by 16%; this government's debt has gone up by 44%. A little hocus-pocus there, a little shortchanging, short-selling, today's voters, and certainly shortchanging tomorrow's.

One of the other things that Jack Mintz talks about in the article is found on page 297. There we see what's really going on. This government, in 2009, had an average maturity on our debts of eight years. That debt is now maturing at 14 years. We're ever extending the

length of time. We keep re-amortizing the mortgage on Ontario. All of us know that in our homes, we try to pay off our mortgage. We try to reduce the amortization. We try to build up equity. This Liberal government keeps extending out the amortization every budget, every year. We know what that game is all about. It appears that they've got a little bit more money for cash flow at the end of the month, but they just keep extending the debt.

You can go through this budget and go through the tables, on and on, and you can see what this government is doing. It's not been of benefit to the people of Ontario. Also, if you take a look at these tables, you will see that although we've near doubled our debt in this province, our assets have only grown by about \$30 billion. We've increased the debt over this period of time by \$150 billion, but we've only increased our assets by \$30 billion. That's a hole; that's a big hole.

They talk about spending money on infrastructure? Their budget demonstrates that it's not in infrastructure where we're going into debt. We can't pay the monthly bills because of the financial incompetence of this government. The money is not going into infrastructure; that's not what we're going into debt for. We could all accept going into debt to buy a house, or to buy an asset. But these guys are going into debt just to pay the credit card bill at the end of each month. They're extending the mortgage and amortizing it longer so that they can pay the credit cards.

This became really significant to me a little while ago—how this impacts people, how the financial budgetary measures of this government impact people. I had a Dr. Carl Rubino come to my office in December. Dr. Rubino is a clinical psychiatrist. He used to be a deputy minister in the Ontario government's Ministry of Community and Social Services. He retired about 20 years ago, and devoted his retirement to a group called the Dalhousie Group, who provide a program called the Cordick Education and Treatment Program to youth who have intellectual disabilities, or mental health or behavioural problems, and who have been excluded from the education process. They can't function in regular schools, so the Cordick Education and Treatment Program was developed to give these kids an opportunity to get an education. Dr. Rubino came to see me and he said, "This program is in jeopardy of closing. Can you help us out?" I said to Carl, "I'll certainly do my best." On February 11, 2016, this letter was sent to all the parents of those children at the Cordick Education and Treatment Program:

"The Cordick Education and Treatment Program ... will, with regret, be forced to close its provision of the treatment side of the program as of February 29, 2016.

"After 19 years of operation, and supporting over 600 youth from our local schools, who were not able to function in our mainstream school system due to significant social/emotional (mental health) struggles, this is a truly disappointing result."

I'm not going to read the whole letter. But that was the letter that was sent out to the families.

To give you an idea of just how convoluted, complex and complicated—unnecessarily so—this government has made things: It took me two months to find out who funded this program from the government. There was funding from the Ministry of Education, there was funding from the children's aid society and there was funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. But guess what? No one knew who the program coordinator was. It took me two months. I eventually tracked the fellow down. His name is David Remington. He's in Kingston. It's interesting. I challenge everybody in this House: Go on the Ontario government website, their directory, and punch in the name David Remington or Barbara Landry. You will not find them. He's a director; Barbara is a program supervisor. They do not exist—but they do. It took me two months to find them, and we did.

On Monday of this week, we got approval for six more weeks of funding for the Cordick Education and Treatment Program. Let me put this in perspective here. The program runs the same as the school year. We were looking to keep the program running until June. The amount of money that the Cordick Education and Treatment Program needs to keep operating until June is a staggering—staggering—\$25,000. That's what they need. We've managed to get them enough funds to go to the middle of April—so far.

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You hear about this compassion and this protection of the vulnerable from the Liberal side. After three months, we finally squeezed out six weeks of funding for children who have social and emotional struggles and who can't function in a school setting. It's going to take more efforts and more time to get that funded to the end of June. We need to do these things, Speaker. Those, really, are their responsibilities. That's who government is here to help: those who are disadvantaged, who are vulnerable and who need our assistance. That's who we need to help, not Samsung. We don't need to help Samsung, and we don't need to help the Chris Mazzas of the world. We need to help those people who rely and are dependent on others for their well-being.

But isn't that a story? Two months to find a director—as I said, his name's David Remington. I truly wish and hope—because there's going to be somebody on the other side of this aisle, somebody in the Liberal benches who's going to be approached one day by a treatment and education program in their riding that doesn't have funding. They're going to be coming, pleading with that MPP to find funding to keep the programs in their riding. I don't mind sharing with you David Remington's phone number. I'll help you along. That's what we need to do. But it is going to happen.

We have to fix things, Speaker. We have to fix things. This is unacceptable. It is intolerable that a program that helps the emotionally disturbed and troubled and people with struggles, which is funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, funded by the Ministry of Education, funded by the children's aid society—funded by who knows what else. Why does it take three

substantial bureaucracies of this government to find how to spend \$25,000 effectively? I know they can spend money. We've all seen them do it. We all saw them take moments to spend a billion dollars on gas plants. But to take three months to get them to agree to spend \$25,000 for kids who need help? That's a tragedy. That cannot be justified in any manner.

But that's what we see this government do: Spend the big announcements. The \$7 billion for Samsung, the billion dollars on the gas plants: Those are all easy to do. Nobody can hold them to account for anything. But I can tell you, the families in my riding, the moms and dads of these kids, are going to hold you to account. They are going to hold you to account, and you're going to have to stand up and justify to them why you've let them down. Why did you only find enough to keep their program going for six weeks?

I want to hear the response to the Cordick program during questions and comments. I want to see if any Liberal member will take up my challenge and go look for that program director of section 23 program funding. That's what it's called: section 23 program funding. Try to find it; and I want you to give me a call back, but take up the challenge. Go around and talk to the other groups in your ridings and see how their funding is being affected by your party—by this government. Maybe you're fortunate. Maybe the Cordick program is the only one like that. I doubt it. I doubt it very much.

We know that there are consultations going on across the province right now for these demonstration schools for alternative learning. They're all in jeopardy, and they don't make the headlines with this Liberal government. It doesn't seem to pull at their heartstrings when it's just moms and dads who can't find a way to take care of their kids. That's not a big photo op; it doesn't sound good.

They'll get up there and talk about their budget. They'll hide the truth. They'll keep extending the mortgage, keep extending the amortization. It's just a shell game. As Jack Mintz says, the system is rigged. And we know who has rigged it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you very much for allowing me to speak again. I want to talk about Bill 173. I didn't get quite through everything in my last two minutes about how we continue to attack seniors.

I listened with great interest when they talked about it being an ambitious budget, on the other side of the House. I thought to myself, "Ambitious?" I wonder if the 1,200 registered nurses whose positions have been cut since 2015 would think this is an ambitious budget. I would think not.

If you take a look at what is going on with health care in the province of Ontario, it's about privatizing health care; that's what is going on. It's not getting to the front-line workers. People say to me, "How can you say that?" I can say that from Niagara, because we just went through a nasty three-month strike with CarePartners.

What happens there is that the LHIN would give money to the CCAC, and then it would go to Care-



Partners. Guess what happens then? It gets to the front-line workers, but by the time it goes from the LHIN to the CCAC to CarePartners to the front-line workers, and everybody has taken their money out, there's nothing left for health care for our seniors. It's an attack. Quite frankly, that's what is going on with health care.

I'm going to be able to talk for another couple minutes through the course of this afternoon, and I'll explain that further. But I really would like the other side of the House to listen to this, because they don't look like they are, and that's unfortunate. Health care is very important for the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça me fait bien plaisir de parler aujourd'hui au sujet du budget qui a été déposé jeudi passé parce que, comme le disait ma collègue d'Ottawa-Orléans, nous avons eu une belle présentation à La Cité collégiale au sujet du budget.

Il y avait beaucoup, beaucoup d'étudiants qui étaient là et des journalistes qui posaient des questions. Les étudiants, bien sûr, étaient très heureux. La Cité collégiale recevait 10 million de dollars pour agrandir La Cité pour avoir un centre pour les étudiants, un centre d'innovation où les employeurs vont pouvoir venir et travailler avec les étudiants. En même temps, les étudiants vont en bénéficier. Les «business» vont pouvoir aussi en profiter—de la recherche appliquée, comme on l'appelle. Alors, cela a été une superbe bonne nouvelle.

Et, la meilleure nouvelle était d'avoir réduit à zéro les frais de scolarité pour les enfants des familles qui font moins de 50 000 \$. La présidente de l'association des étudiants du collège était là et est venue nous féliciter.

Il y a eu beaucoup de questions sur «cap-and-trade», beaucoup de questions. Bien sûr, le message qu'on a donné et le message que les étudiants voulaient entendre aussi, c'est que ceux qui polluent vont payer. Parce que si ceux qui polluent ne payent pas, c'est tout le monde en Ontario qui va payer pour nettoyer et pour réparer ce que la pollution va avoir fait en Ontario. Ça a été une très belle présentation, très bien reçue par les étudiants.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'll cut to the chase: Life is going to be more expensive for people in Ontario and for businesses to conduct business in Ontario, based on this budget that our current Liberal government has presented. I might also add that, for the businesses in Ontario, maybe a word of caution would be, "The last business to leave, please turn out the lights."

I want to talk about the Ontario Student Grant portion. We believe, over here—as I think all of us in the Legislature believe—that education is very, very important and it's something that needs to be pursued. But here's the reality: Ontario students are already faced with the highest tuition costs in all of Canada.

Now, according to their plan—and they're touting the 30%; I want to talk about the 70% of students in Ontario

who are not eligible for full benefit of the program that they are talking about. They'll say, "Yes, but you're forgetting about the 30%"—and I know the Attorney General just finished talking about the 30% of people. But you know what? What I find interesting is that it's too bad—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Speaker, if you want to interrupt them for a minute, because I find it very distracting. If they could just keep it down a little bit—thank you.

What I find very disturbing, Speaker, is the fact that 30% of students are eligible. You say, "That's disturbing?" I'll tell you why. It's also disturbing to me that more than 30% of families in Ontario, based on all the jobs that have left this province, now fall into that \$50,000 combined threshold or less. To me, that's a travesty.

We need to get this province back on track and get the people back working where that threshold can be raised. I look at it and I say, listen, then we can be doing something for the students of Ontario," but not that way.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener-Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington actually quoted Bernie Sanders; he said that "the system is rigged." It's hard for us not to feel some sort of solidarity in that kind of statement from this side of the House. Because I have the 2015 Auditor General's report, I have last year's budget and I have this year's budget, and the disconnect between what is actually happening in the province of Ontario and this government's response to these issues is profound.

Just before the member got up to say his statement, the Minister of Community and Social Services talked about how this government is going to be addressing the clawback on social assistance. This is a long-standing issue—\$280 a month, Mr. Speaker. So if a parent actually pays child support to a single mother who has children, the government finds a way to claw back that money, thus keeping those very women and children in a constant state of poverty. This is a long-standing issue, and yet the government has said that they're going to have to take a whole other year—April 2017. They're going to take a whole other year to decide that stealing from children and mothers who are on social assistance is something that they just cannot tolerate anymore.

This is where the disconnect on public consultation actually happens with this government. We've travelled around this province. If this government was listening, if the finance minister or the Premier was listening to the people of this province, this budget would look so different, Mr. Speaker, because they wouldn't need another year to decide that clawing back \$280 from the most vulnerable, poorest people in the province of Ontario is something that they have to take another year to look at.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington has two minutes.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member from Niagara Falls, the Attorney

General and the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo.

I will make this point: That two-minute round is called “questions and comments.” It’s supposed to be questions and comments about the debate. I’m glad the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was listening, but it was deafening, the sounds from the Liberal side, as they didn’t answer or ask or respond in any fashion to the 20-minute response.

I want to read this last little bit: “For youth in the primary grades (K-8) who are struggling academically as well as behaviourally due to a variety of mental health issues, we have been a soft space to land”—that’s Cordick Education and Treatment Program—“in safe, small, highly supported classrooms. Not only have academic skills been improved but primarily the children have been provided with support in managing personal internal/external struggles that lead to admission in the first place.”

Not one Liberal member referenced or commented about the Cordick Education and Treatment Program. Not one of them had an interest in it. The Attorney General went on a bit of a tangent about some spending announcement. As I said in my 20 minutes, they’re very good at big spending announcements, but they’re absolutely inept and incompetent in helping those who are vulnerable, those who need assistance and those who are calling out and pleading for government to help the disadvantaged. It’s a tragic, tragic budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I want to paint a picture of what’s really going on with this budget, and it’s something that this government does all too well. They are so great at telling people a message, but the problem with their message is that they say one thing, but in actuality, they’re doing something completely opposite and often completely contradictory to what they’re saying.

Let me just paint this picture for you. One of the things this government says they do is, “We are going to prioritize the people. This is a people’s budget.” Now, people would appreciate if the government just said it like it really was.

For example, when the government says, “Hey, we’re going to invest in health care. We’re going to invest a 1% increase in health care,” they should just say, “Hey, we’re going to continue cutting health care.” Because the reality is—this isn’t hard; I’m not an expert in this area—that if your inflation is 1.8%, and you have a growing and aging population, a 1% increase, if it’s less than inflation, is not an increase. It is still a deficit. It is still a cut because it’s not matching inflation. How can you say with a straight face, “We are investing in health care,” when you are below the inflation rate?

On top of that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** You could just say what it is. It’s fine. We would at least appreciate and respect that you’re saying the truth about what’s going on. Why do you have

to navigate in such a meandering way that no one understands what you are actually doing?

First off, let’s be real: Five years of funding freezes are cuts. That’s five years of cuts. On top of that, a 1% increase is also a cut. You’re cutting health care. Just say it. Admit it. It’s fine. You want to cut health care. We don’t believe in that, but you could at least say it. You could at least tell people what you’re doing: “Hey, we are going to cut health care for another year.” Just say it.

That’s the problem with this budget. I challenge someone to tell me how a 1% increase when inflation is 1.8%, we have an aging population and we have population growth, is in any way not a cut. Please explain that to me. I look forward to your explanation. I really would enjoy it.

Another thing: This government said, “Hey, we are going to be the most progressive, open and transparent government ever. We are going to broaden the ownership of Hydro One.” That is so disingenuous. Let’s be real. When you sell off a public asset, you are not broadening its ownership; you are narrowing the ownership. Just say it though: “Hey, we want to narrow the ownership. We want to sell it to some rich people and we don’t want it to be a public asset anymore.” Just say that. That would be pretty honest of you. That would be pretty forthright of you. People would understand: “Okay, you are telling it like it is. We appreciate that. We don’t agree with you; we don’t want you to sell our public assets,” but at least it would be telling people exactly what’s happening instead of using these language games and jumping through hoops and saying, “We’re going to broaden the ownership.” You’re not. You’re selling off a public asset.

1640

On top of that—this is the kicker—you’re saying, “Hey, we want to sell off this public asset to fund transit,” when that makes absolutely no sense. We tell you it doesn’t make any sense, but don’t worry about us. An independent officer of this Legislative Assembly says very clearly that it is the wrong way. It is in fact far more expensive, and selling off Hydro One will put the province in a worse fiscal position.

How can you spin that? How can you look someone in the eyes and say, “We are going to sell this public asset to build transit,” when it’s actually going to put us in a worse fiscal position, independently? I just don’t get how you can say that. Just say, “We need to sell it off because it’s going to somehow benefit us. We don’t want to tell you the real reason why we’re selling it off. There’s some secret reason that’s going to benefit our party and that’s why we’re doing it.”

At least I would say that you’re telling it like it is, that you’re telling us what is really going on. That would be cool. But there’s no way you can spin this. No one believes that. It’s just unbelievable to say that somehow it’s going to help fund transit. It’s not. Independent people are telling you that it’s not going to help fund transit.

You know this in your hearts. I’m sure you know this because this party—the Liberal Party—stood up in this



Legislative Assembly and criticized the Conservatives, bent over backwards, saying, "You are so wrong to sell off Hydro One." You criticized them, and somehow that same principle of selling off Hydro One that was wrong when the Conservatives were doing it is now good when you're doing it. How does that make sense? It's just not logical.

In fairness, the Conservatives tried to do it and they had the wherewithal to realize, "We won't sell all of it off. We'll stop now." They stopped. The Conservatives stopped the sell-off. You're doing more selling of a public asset than the Conservatives. How does that make any sense? It's unbelievable.

Listen, the reality of the matter is, let's look at the position of people in this province. What's going on with people in this province? You think that you're somehow benefiting or helping the people. People are worse off. After over a decade of Liberal rule, people are worse off than they were before.

Let's talk about how badly off people are. You want to talk about education? That's a great topic. Education is a great topic. Let's talk about post-secondary education: the lowest-funded public education in the country when it comes to post-secondary education—the lowest-funded. That's a fact. Tell me if it's not a fact: the lowest-funded in the entire country. You guys are funding post-secondary education the lowest.

We have the highest tuition in the entire country—the most expensive tuition in the entire country—in this province. I'm going to put it out there: It's probably because we're the lowest-funded that we're also the most expensive. That would seem to me to make a little bit of logical sense. Under this government, the tuitions have skyrocketed. There's no cap on tuition. That's a fact. I'm just telling you facts. If anything I'm saying is not a fact, you can tell me. You have the chance to get up and do your questions and comments. The most expensive tuition in the province, the least-funded—these are facts. You don't care about post-secondary education. You don't care about students. That's a fact.

You've been cutting education when it comes to our primary and our secondary schools. You're cutting education. There have been continual cuts to education. Just tell us, though. Don't say that you're not doing it and try to come up with other jumps through hoops and makeups and reasons that don't make any sense. Just tell us: "Hey, we are going to cut education. We don't care about post-secondary education. We're going to make it the most expensive." Just tell us, because those are the facts. Just tell us the truth. Tell us what's really going on.

When it comes to the reality that people are facing in this province, another major issue is precarious employment. What I mean by that is insecure employment, unstable employment, part-time employment. What is this government's track record on that issue?

That is a major issue for racialized people in this province. In fact, the most impacted by precarious employment are women, so this is a women's rights issue. This is a racialized community issue. This is a human

rights issue. People are working in deplorable conditions year after year. They're working in situations where they are being exploited. And what is the government's track record? Let us look at the facts in this situation. Here are some facts for you. Ready for this?

We have a newspaper article written by a reporter, Sara Mojtahedzadeh. She writes on May 10, 2015—here are the facts: "Over the past decade" of this government's rule, from 2004 to 2014, "there has been a 33% increase in the number of temporary workers in Toronto...." That is a fact.

Let's talk about more details. "The ... employment services sector earned \$5.7 billion in revenue in 2012," a 72% jump since 2002. "Temporary agencies account for an estimated 60% of that industry's total revenue."

You have created the conditions for temporary agencies to flourish. You have created the conditions for precarious employment to flourish. Put bluntly, you have created the conditions that put people in these insecure, unstable, bad-paying, exploiting jobs. You have done this. This is your track record in this province. I'm just telling you the facts.

Precarious employment is a major problem, Mr. Speaker. This government is the responsible party for it. These are the facts.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I like facts.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Facts are great.

Let's talk about another major issue. Folks tell me all the time—and I'm sure you get it all the time too—that life is getting harder. It's not getting easier; life is getting harder for people. That's the reality: Life is getting more expensive.

Let's talk about some of those expenses. There's one expense—and it needs to be framed the right way. Auto insurance rates in this province are the highest in the country. But let's delve a bit deeper and see what is going on with the auto insurance industry. It's actually an issue of fairness. It's actually an issue of exploitation.

If you look at the reality in this province, this government said in 2010, "Hey, we get it." This Liberal government said, "Hey, we get it: The rates are too high. We will do something about it."

The finance minister at the time got up and said, "I'm going to address this issue of high auto insurance." How did he say he was going to do it? This is important, because this is a prioritizing piece. The Liberal government said, "We are going to reduce the costs that insurance companies incur, and when we do that, it's going to bring down premiums."

So what did they do? The Liberal government eviscerated our benefits. They didn't cut it in half. I don't even know the exact percentage, but they cut it by, like, 75%. The reality is that this government, in one year, through one policy, decreased the costs that the insurance companies pay out in the province of Ontario by \$1 billion.

What did that actually look like? These are the facts. This is your evidence. You saw the same evidence when we were in committee together. The evidence is this: We used to have benefits that—one part still exists: catas-

trophically injured people get \$1 million of coverage. That's not a straight \$1-million cheque; that's \$1 million to cover a lifetime for folks who are paraplegic, for their rehabilitation and for the services they need so that they can live in their communities, and it barely covers their necessities. They have that. Those are the most vulnerable, seriously injured people in our province. They are seriously injured folks, and they have \$1 million of coverage.

After that, people had the ability to claim up to \$100,000. Those are very seriously injured people, but not catastrophically injured. That \$100,000 was slashed in half to \$50,000. People who needed \$100,000 now only got \$50,000.

What makes matters worse—this is the part that's the most terrible part of this whole thing—is that the government created a third category that didn't exist before: the minor injury guideline. That cap is at \$3,500, and 80% of people who make a claim in this province are forced into the minor injury guideline. Put bluntly, 80% of people who are injured in a car can only claim \$3,500. Before, those very same people could claim up to \$100,000, depending on how injured they were, but now they can't.

As a result, this is what has happened—and these funds aren't settlement claims; those settlement claims are separate. This is strictly for patient care. That patient care amount went down to \$3,500. I'm sure some of the doctors in your caucus will tell you that this is the reality. The care went down to \$3,500, and 80% of people now only get that amount.

1650

What that did is, legitimately injured people do not get coverage anymore. You'll hear countless stories of people telling you that, "We're seriously injured but we are forced into the minor injury guideline and we don't get coverage." So legitimately injured people were cut off from care—and yes, there were some fraudulent people; absolutely. Those folks were cut off too.

These caps—that \$1 billion of savings didn't just happen one year and stop. That's forever. You are placing caps on the amount that people can claim; that has eradicated the issue of fraud in a massive way. I asked this question to the anti-fraud task force chair in the auto insurance committee. I said, "The amount of savings that you have enjoyed as the auto insurance industry from the reduction in these caps is colossal. It's more than all of the fraud combined because you got rid of fraud and you also got rid of legitimately injured people." But this is about the priorities of this government. This government doesn't care about people. This government cares about the insurance companies ensuring that they get massive profits. They don't care about the fact that fraud has been eradicated in a massive way. They've got rid of legitimately injured people as well as fraudulent people. They don't care about that. They wanted to make sure that the costs went down for the insurance industry. Guess what? Surprise, surprise: Their profits have skyrocketed.

What has happened to the premiums? This is the question. The premiums have gone up by 5% in that time

period, from 2010 when those cuts came in. So we got less benefits but the premiums went up by 5%. How does that make any sense? On top of that, this government has taken away the right of people to sue if the insurance companies deny them a claim. So if I'm an insurance company and I deny you the right to have a cane or a walker, you can't sue to get that cane or walker back. That's what's the your government has done.

On top of that—here is the kicker—do you know which regions, which communities, are the hardest hit for auto insurance rates? It's not downtown Toronto. It is an interesting point. The Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force: I asked them this question in committee directly. I said, "Sir"—this is in Hansard—"can you tell me which city fraud occurs in?"

He said, "No, I can't."

I go, "Can you not pinpoint a particular city? People claim that there's higher fraud in Peel, that there's higher fraud in Brampton."

"I cannot," he said. He said, "I can only tell you that the GTA is more expensive than other parts of the province." That's all he could say.

Those are the facts, and that's fine. But the issue is that communities that are racialized, that have new immigrants, that are hard-off, that are lower-income—those are every community that has higher costs. Scarborough has higher costs, North York has higher costs, and Brampton and Malton—which are in Mississauga—have higher costs. All these communities are racialized, all these communities are low-income or lower-income, and all these communities have newer folks that have come to the country.

This is exploitation, and this government is responsible for these policies that are exploiting racialized people, that are exploiting new Canadians, and that's why we see very clearly the true priorities of this government. Those are some of the major issues.

Let's talk about health care. On the health care issue—we've talked about this but let's just touch on it one more time—this government decides that a senior earning \$19,500 is somehow affluent and they think that they can double their cost for a medical prescription. That is simply unacceptable. That is low. Why would you do that to seniors that are not even, in any way, in any broad definition, affluent? Why would you put that burden on them? That shows you, again, the priorities of this government.

Let's talk about the tuition promise that the government has given—again, great language. I support this idea. It's a fantastic idea to ensure that people can afford post-secondary education. That is beautiful. It's a beautiful idea. But when you start looking at the realities, initially the government didn't really talk about if it's indexed to inflation. They said, "No, no, it is. It is indexed to inflation."

What about the fact that tuition rates increase every year and we have skyrocketing tuition rates? "Oh, no, we actually didn't factor that in. We didn't really address that." Well, how can it then be completely covered if it's



not indexed to the increasing tuition rates? Now the government is saying, "Hey, we're going to backtrack. We're going to address it," which is great. I support you backtracking. It's important. Sometimes you make mistakes.

But the problem is that you're making so many mistakes. You're making all these mistakes. You made a mistake with respect to seniors, you made a mistake with the rollout of this plan because you didn't factor in the fact that tuition rates increase, and—the biggest mistake—you're selling off a public asset. It doesn't make sense to do that. There's no evidence to support this. In fact, the evidence supports not selling it off but you're still going to do it because evidence doesn't work with you.

Here's another example of evidence. I've got to give credit to our member from Parkdale–High Park for bringing up the issue of the Union Pearson Express. The model was so flagrantly a fail. It was such a failed policy. It was such a poor model, and no one can hold their head up when they look at that model. It makes no sense. What industrialized nation is making diesel trains now? What industrialized nation in the world is like, "Hey, we're going to build a brand new diesel train. On top of that, let's just compound it"—maybe there could be a reason for just that—"let's make it go from one spot to only one spot." Where every other airplane link in major cities of the world is integrated with the subways, and those are the ones that are successful—"No, we're not going to integrate it with the subway. We're just going to keep a separate line that goes from one spot to another spot and comes through communities that actually need public transit. But let's not put a stop in those communities that could actually benefit from it."

The people of Davenport would love to have a train that would stop for them, but now they have a diesel train that can't increase its stops because it takes too long for it to speed up and slow down, that's not electrified and that's way too expensive. It's such a flawed model that no one is using it. No one is using your train because it's not a good idea. You didn't design it properly; you didn't build it right. We told you before that there were serious problems with it, but you didn't listen because you don't like evidence-based decisions. You've got to look at the evidence. If the evidence isn't there, you can't do it. It doesn't make sense.

The final piece that I really want to touch on is the Anti-Racism Directorate. Now, I think that's a great initiative. The government did a good job. Years and years of activists—over a decade of activists—raised issues around the fact that we need to have an anti-racism directorate or secretariat to provide that lens to address systemic racism. It's a great issue; years and years of activists raised the issue. The NDP most recently pushed for this; New Democrats pushed hard for it. We're honoured that the government decided to move on the issue.

But we expected something. A budget just occurred. When this directorate was announced, a lot of people felt that, although it's a great announcement and a great

issue, an announcement without any funding is really just an empty promise. People have been a bit jaded, to be honest, with this government and its broken promises. Did this budget include any funding for the Anti-Racism Directorate? No. You think that you can trick people by announcing beautiful things without any funding; it's not going to work anymore. People will see through that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 173.

I want to remind the member opposite from Bramalea–Gore–Malton how he selectively shared with us how we are funding the health care sector.

First of all, he's selective on what section he wanted to share with us this afternoon. We are increasing funding to hospitals: \$345 million toward hospitals. Having taught nursing for a number of years before I came here, the data and the evidence show that the focus must be on primary care and primary prevention, not tertiary care or the hospital piece. But we are increasing funding to hospitals to the tune of \$345 million.

The member opposite did not even mention that we are increasing a million dollars toward those affected by pregnancy and infant loss, \$75 million dealing with hospice and palliative care—\$170 dealing with the shingles vaccine for seniors between the ages of 65 and 70. There's an extensive section in the budget that deals with the transformation of health care, and there are significant portions dealing with seniors and long-term care. We are increasing—\$10 million to Behavioural Supports Ontario; and another 2% increase over the next three years in terms of long-term care.

I challenge the member opposite to say that we are not focused on evidence, we're not seeing increasing health care costs—and the fact that we have also expanded the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and pharmacists. I believe the members would agree with me that it is the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to congratulate the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton for his speech today on the budget and how hurtful it's going to be to Ontarians. I want to pick up a little bit on that.

The Consumer Policy Institute recently released a study in which they examined hydro rates across North America over the past nine years. Not in one single province or any of the 50 states have hydro rates gone up as quickly as they have in Ontario. In fact, in Ontario, electricity rates have gone up three times faster than the inflation rate on other goods and services.

1700

But I guess the Minister of Energy, who's saying that things have really gotten better here, is taking care of the people now because in the budget, there's this insulting—absolutely insulting—\$2-a-month rebate. For somebody whose hydro bills have gone up \$1,000 under this government, there's a \$2 rebate on your monthly hydro

bill. You're getting a toonie, with which you can buy a small cup of coffee at Tim Hortons. I understand that the Minister of Energy likes to compare electricity and cups of coffee. So this is what their message is to people who are struggling with high hydro bills here in Ontario.

Remember: He keeps saying that there are other jurisdictions that are rising faster. The Consumer Policy Institute did the study: Not a single one of the other nine provinces—not one—but even more importantly, not one of the 50 states south and to our northwest have electricity rates that have risen as quickly as the ones here in Ontario.

This budget does nothing to give relief on electricity. You should be embarrassed to table it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton raised so many issues in his criticism of this budget, and rightly so, everything from temp agencies to precarious work to the 1,200 fewer nurses who are in the system—which actually is a cut; you can't call 1,200 fewer nurses in the system anything but a cut.

On the hydro bills, this was one of his strongest points—and I want to go back to the Auditor General's report, because I always do. After the AG report came out on the energy file in the province of Ontario, this is what the Globe and Mail said: "On Wednesday, Ontario's Auditor General announced that, between 2006 and 2014, thanks to incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the province's Liberal government, Ontarians overpaid for electricity to the tune of \$37 billion. And over the next 18 years, consumers will be overpaying to the tune of another \$133 billion."

This government is going to try to rectify years of incompetence and mismanagement on the backs of the people of this province, be it in health care, be it in energy, be it around electricity prices. For him to rightly point out the fact that this government continues to move ahead with flawed policies—we knew that.

The member from Davenport was heckling him extensively during this period of time on the UP Express. But even this morning, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs called diesel "evil diesel." Yet, this is what the government moved ahead with. We have a diesel train in 2016, moving through neighbourhoods in the downtown core of Toronto. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is completely correct in this: short-sighted, polluting and, once again, mismanagement on the part of this government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I'm pleased to rise in response to the comments by the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

The New Democrats who I grew up listening to: They seemed to have different values than the current group sitting there. It's unfortunate that the member opposite can't take yes for an answer: yes to lowering tuition for those students in this province who need that help the

most—free tuition for those students; yes to extending the drug benefit to an additional 170,000 seniors across the province, so that they don't have to pay for their drug benefits; yes to the request from small towns and municipalities, who suffered so greatly through the municipal downloading exercise of the Harris government—our government is tripling the infrastructure funding for those small towns and municipalities; yes to the biggest expansion of public transit in the history of this province, in communities across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, Ottawa and other municipalities; yes to more funding for families who have children with autism; yes to more affordable housing; yes to making life easier for Ontarians by eliminating the \$30 fee for the Drive Clean program and by reducing hospital parking rates; and yes to so many things that the New Democrats that I used to know always wanted.

This budget is a budget where in tough economic times, we're investing more money in the services that Ontarians depend—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Well, it appears there are a few feisty members over there, and a few over there who are exchanging blows and not going through moi.

We go through moi, okay? Thank you.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Our translators are going to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I don't need a translation, thank you, Mr. Teacher there. Thank you very much—

**Interjection:** It's "Doctor."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry, Doctor. Sorry, I didn't know the difference.

The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton has two minutes.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** There have been a number of amazing deputations from people in my region, the region of Peel. I want to give a shout-out to Fair Share for Peel, United Way of Peel, the Mississauga legal clinic and the Peel CAS.

They all talked about the reality that's faced by people in Peel, that year after year the funding has not matched the population growth. Peel is one of the most underfunded regions in all of Ontario, and this budget does nothing to address that.

I want to share with folks here some of the issues that people face in Peel: 17% of Peel residents are living in poverty, 20% of Peel children are living in poverty, and the waiting list for affordable housing is 5.3 years, among the longest in the entire province. Youth unemployment is at 18.9%. There have been serious issues of food security. The GTA faces about 52% of folks who are precariously employed, and a lot of that precarious employment is in the region of Peel.

There are some serious issues with what's going on in the region of Peel and this government has not addressed that in any meaningful way in this budget. They have not addressed the chronic underfunding. For years and years,



people of Peel have had to try to squeeze as much money as they can out of the little that they get, and the situation is getting more and more dire.

We want public transit, like a GO train. This government keeps on announcing that they're going to increase the GO Transit from Brampton downtown to Union; they haven't significantly increased that. They continue to announce it, but the reality is that people aren't seeing that relief that they were promised. The government loves to make the announcements, but the reality, again, is not there. People aren't seeing the increased ridership. They aren't seeing the increased ability to get downtown and to move around.

This government is not prioritizing the region of Peel, and it's disgraceful. We know that this budget is simply another example of their failed priorities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate?

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be sharing my time with the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

I'm very pleased to rise today to add my voice in support of Bill 173, our budget measures act. I sit on the finance committee, where I had the opportunity to tour the province, and I heard many concerns from many Ontarians. We went from Windsor to Ottawa, and we travelled the north.

We heard about such issues as autism, affordable housing, increasing social assistance and helping people with special needs. We kept hearing over and over again the importance of increasing funding in these areas. We heard those concerns, and we are delivering, with increased funding in all of these areas.

We also heard many voices speak to us about our need to invest in infrastructure. In my riding, in Kitchener Centre, we have advocates in municipal government, the tech sector, advanced manufacturing, financial services, academia and social services. They all told me how very pleased they are to see our commitment to investing in better transit.

The day after the budget, I held a budget luncheon. We had a tremendous turnout there, and many of the people in attendance expressed to me how delighted they were with many of the points within the budget. Particularly, they said they realized that the government gets it. In Waterloo region we are at the heart of Ontario's SuperCorridor, and I just want to read a small section here from page 10 that resonates: Our corridor "represents Canada's most innovative region, with dense pockets of start-ups, research institutions and world-class talent. To ensure its continued success, Ontario will work with partners to enhance the connectivity of the corridor."

1710

So, Mr. Speaker, to ensure our continued success, we are working with our rail partners and with our federal counterparts to liberate the Kitchener line. We're looking forward to making a very significant announcement before the summer to improve rail service in our area.

There are other very important investments in my region that are mentioned in this budget. For the University of Waterloo, we have an advanced manufacturing consortium. This is going to be in conjunction with McMaster and Western. We have renewed funding for the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics. We are moving forward with our plan for high-speed rail. David Collenette, who has been named as the special adviser, has been travelling the province. He was in Kitchener a few weeks ago. From there, he moved on to London and Windsor. He's collecting feedback in order to advance high-speed rail. We are widening the 401 between Cambridge and Kitchener. The ION, our light rail transit system: Construction is under way, and I look forward to taking that first ride in 2017.

All of these initiatives in my region are tied to enhancing our innovation capacity. It drives economic growth and prosperity. I know that stakeholders in my community are going to be paying very close attention to how MPPs in my region are going to be voting on the budget bill. Do those members support the University of Waterloo? Do they support Perimeter Institute? Do they support all the transit projects? People in Kitchener and in Waterloo region are watching the way that you are going to be voting. I'll make sure that they know how you voted, if you are in favour of or against a—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** And I'm watching the exchange, and it seems to be going between you two. I would like it to go through me.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I'll use Italian if you'd like.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** It's better than mine.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

So, from now on, we'll go through me.

**M. Shafiq Qadri:** Toi.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Whatever. Thank you.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My stakeholders in my region have told me that they are going to be paying very close attention to how Waterloo region MPPs are going to be voting in this budget, because they care about advancing transit and other investments in my region. Will they be saying no to KidsAbility, which helps children with autism? Are they going to be saying no to increasing funding to Grand River Hospital? People in Kitchener and Waterloo region are watching.

So I'm proud to see that we are investing in people and we're investing in infrastructure. That is why I support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate and hear the opinions of all members of this House, from all sides. My colleague who just spoke I think certainly did a good job of outlining some of the positive aspects of this budget.

I spent 18 years at the local level of government, at the regional level and the town level, before I came here. Those other members who have served at that level will know that we go through a very similar process, in that we all get together—the council gets together, forms a budget committee, and then everybody brings their ideas to the floor as to what they think should be in the budget and what shouldn't be in the budget.

I was counting, and I think I was first elected when I was still in my twenties. So this, I think, will be either my 30th or my 31st budget, and each one of them has been roughly the same. People have brought forward ideas that they'd like to see included. Of course, at the local level, you don't get the partisanship. At this level, obviously, you get the parties bringing forward either what they have run on in the election or what their philosophy holds. But each and every time, Speaker, it should be a healthy exchange of ideas, which I think we are having today.

But what used to make me mad at the local level, and makes me mad here as well, is that often the same people that are asking you to spend are the people that are also asking you to cut, in the same sentence. It doesn't matter which party is in power: That simply can't be done. Often you get fairly reasonable advice from the opposition party, saying, "We'd like to see this," or, "If you tweaked this a bit or if you spent a bit more money there, perhaps that would work better."

But, Speaker, when I look at this budget—obviously, when you take it out, as a member of the government, your job is to defend it. It's to tell people why you think it's the best way that we should be conducting ourselves financially in the upcoming year.

I'll tell you, it was just a complete fluke, Speaker, that the day after the budget I was visiting a grade 10 class. They hadn't paid much attention to the budget in the paper that day or they hadn't gotten it online yet. When I explained the tuition advances that we're proposing in this budget—grade 10s are pretty hard to impress, and these people were very impressed. I didn't ask them their own income levels—that would have been rude—but I think I could see in some of their eyes that this was going to make a change in their lives. Suddenly, post-secondary education was something that they could do. I think that perhaps before that some of them had counted themselves out simply because they knew that the family means may not have allowed for that.

When you see the things that are included in the budget—I find when I'm talking to people in my own community, when I talk about the tuition advances that we've been able to make, making university or college or skills training basically free for those people who earn under \$50,000, and certainly about half-price for those who are earning under \$83,000; when you look at the infrastructure investments that we know that this province needs—and people from all parties, there's nobody in this room going to heaven based on what they've done on infrastructure in the past—we are finally starting to get a grip on what we need to do. We are spending \$137

billion over the next 10 years and \$160 billion over the next 12 years.

I've seen the changes in the GO train service in my own community. I've seen those changes. I know what it means to the community. The community comes up and thanks me for it. It's my job to do it. Certainly, you can tell it has made a change in their lives and that they're able to go to the GO train station and essentially treat it as a subway. You don't have to arrive at a certain time; you arrive and a train will show up. When you go throughout the rush hour, trains are running in every 15 minutes, every 10 minutes. During the day they're there every 30 minutes.

We've just invested about \$2.5 billion in Oakville in a brand new hospital. It's the sort of thing you can only do if you plan for it in advance. It's only a thing you can do if you don't run from election to election. Instead, you look 10 or 12 years into the future and put the political election cycle to one side and you start to work on a forecast, because you know—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Guess who? Why is it always that the decibel level goes up when you come in?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I have a lot of love to give.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Yes, and I have a lot of love to give too. Cut with the crosstalk, please. Thank you.

Continue.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you for calming that man down.

Health care is something that I think we can't help but look at. Certainly, all of us have been approached by parents who are dealing with children who are dealing with the challenges of autism. We see the investment in here for autism services. We've all said it should be done. We've all tried to find a way to do it. This budget allows us to invest about a third of a billion dollars for autism services, little things like hospital parking, things that people complain daily about. I complain about it; they're simply too high. We've been able to do things like that.

I think, on balance, if you look at this from an objective point of view, you put the partisanship aside and say, "Is this a good way to manage the budget for the next year in the province of Ontario?" When you compare Ontario on a financial basis relative to the rest of the world, Ontario is doing very well and should continue to do well. It's budgets like this that plan responsibly for that to happen. I understand it's the job of the opposition to criticize, and I expect them to do exactly that, but what I'm finding in the community is that people, by and large, think that this is a reasonable budget and that this House should support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank my colleagues who have preceded me and for allowing me to have a few minutes today—about nine minutes—to speak on our budget.



I only have a bit of time, so I thought I would perhaps frame my remarks in terms of a rebuttal directly to the Leader of the Opposition, the leader of the Conservatives, who has been on his feet more than once talking not only about this budget but previous budgets that have come from our Liberal government having, in his opinion, ignored northern Ontario. So, Speaker, I would need much more than the nine minutes I've been allotted here today to try and fully address that, but in the few minutes I have, I'm going to do the best I can to just highlight some of the advancements that have been made not only in this particular budget but in previous budgets by our government on behalf of northern Ontario.

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What I would add, before I make my comments, is that all of us on this side of the House are aware that the Leader of the Opposition, of course, sat in the federal House for nine years and had plenty of opportunity to represent the interests of northern Ontario when he was there, and I think, over time, it will become a bit more clear for all of us who are working here in the provincial Legislature whether or not he did a very good job, if a job on that front at all. So we'll look at that as time unfolds and as we get near the end of this particular election cycle and the beginning of a new one.

I want to begin by—and hopefully somewhere along the line the Leader of the Opposition may have an opportunity to correct his record. He stood on his feet, I think at least once, maybe twice, in the House to tell people—not just in northern Ontario but primarily in northern Ontario—that recreational hunting and fishing licences are increasing; in fact, he's wrong. I just want to say that clearly, Speaker: Recreational hunting and fishing licences are not increasing. The leader of the official opposition has stood on his feet at least once and said that. If he's not going to correct his record, then I'm going to have to do it for him. Unequivocally, that is not the case. I'm not sure why he said that, but perhaps he can go back and just find some capacity to check on the research there, because it's just not the case. It's wrong. I apologize for him—not on behalf of him; I shouldn't do that. He can do that on his own. It's wrong.

On a bigger piece, we have some items that I really do want to highlight in terms of investments that have been made that have resulted in investment in northern Ontario and have directly resulted in investment in northern Ontario.

In 1995, the Conservatives took a public policy position—that's their choice: "We're not in the mass transit game." They did that in 1995. By the time 2003 rolled around, when we won the election in 2003, the Bombardier plant in my riding was down to 200 to 250 employees. Our decision as a government to invest in mass transit in the province of Ontario has led to that particular manufacturing facility going from 200 to 250 people up to around 1,400 or 1,500. It may be down to 1,200 right now, I'm not sure, but maxing out somewhere in the range of 1,400 to 1,500 employees. That is, by far, the single-biggest private sector employer in Thunder

Bay or northwestern Ontario. The impact of 1,000 private sector jobs that pay well, that have pensions and benefits, to a community like Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario is difficult to calculate, but of course it is very, very large.

What continues on that front is the fact that we have articulated very clearly our intention to continue to invest in a large way in infrastructure over the next 12 years: \$160 billion. But when we hear infrastructure, what does it mean? Well, a lot of that infrastructure spending—and the Minister of Transportation is here and very supportive, because of course what it means is that there will be more continued investment in mass transit. What that means is, there will be more continued opportunity for the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay to bid on and win those contracts so that the employee workforce of 1,200, 1,300, 1,400 can be maintained for years into the future. That opportunity will be presented to them as a result of our broader infrastructure investments.

Speaker, I want to make another point as well. Previously, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton was speaking about insurance rates and how we're talking—at least, I am now, in terms of the northern Ontario context. He brought a private member's bill into the Legislature three, four, five years ago that would have helped insurance rates in southern Ontario, but the number that it would have increased rates by in northern Ontario—it was something like 35% or 40%—was never argued by the member. He was advocating on behalf of his constituency. I won't take any affront to that, but it's important to note that, in the northern Ontario context of my speech, he brought in a private member's bill that would have increased insurance rates in northern Ontario 30%, 35%, 40%. He doesn't debate it. I've spoken against it here, I've spoken against it in northern Ontario communities, and it has never been challenged. But that's okay, on that one; he was working for his constituents. But in northern Ontario, that would have been the impact and the effect.

Our northern highways program in northern Ontario, again, with the help of the Minister of Transportation—the single, high-water mark for investment in northern highways previous to our party coming into power in 2003 was about \$250 million. That was the most money that had ever been expensed on northern highways in any single year. This year's budget—thank you, Minister of Transportation—through the northern highways program, will see that annual allocation this year be at \$550 million. Speaker, it has reached as high as \$650 million, and I think we even might have reached \$700 million in one particular year.

Overall, the increase in the northern highways budget since we came to power in 2003, the incremental number—not just the base number that usually is there—is in the billions. It's massive in terms of what we've been investing in northern highways. People in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and in Thunder Bay–Superior North are very supportive and very happy to see the investments that have been going on for a number of years in northern highways.

One example that stands out for all of us, of course, is the four-laning that is occurring—a large part of it actually done now; maybe one third of that distance, give or take, has been completed between Thunder Bay and Nipigon. A very significant project for us, and one that I say has been requested for decades by people. When are we going to four-lane the highway? Well, we're doing it now, and it's going on.

One other major highway infrastructure project that we're starting—there are not shovels in the ground—that I'm very proud of: A few years ago, I was pleased to announce about \$4 million. We started an environmental assessment on a piece of highway in Thunder Bay between Arthur Street and Balsam Street called the expressway. People in Thunder Bay will be very well aware of this particular stretch.

There are six intersections that exist on that stretch of highway—it's called an expressway, Speaker. Since it was first built, much of the expansion and population growth in Thunder Bay has been on the western side of that expressway. Now much of the population has to cross these intersections, which, in my opinion, are very, very dangerous. There's an intersection at Arthur Street, at the Harbour Expressway, at Oliver Road, at John Street, at Red River Road and at Balsam Street—on an expressway.

We've started and are close to completing the environmental assessment—a \$4-million commitment. I think the last public information session on that piece of roadway will be happening this spring or sometime this summer. Once that is completed, I'm going to be looking to the Minister of Transportation on my right here to say, "Here's what we have. Here are the design options that have come back. Here's another long-overdue project that needs support in the city of Thunder Bay—a northern infrastructure project that helps these communities be safe in their own neighbourhoods."

It is very important, Speaker. The recommendations will come in, and we will be looking for further assistance from the Minister of Transportation to help those projects go forward.

I'm seeing that my time is almost up. I wanted to speak quite significantly, if I had the opportunity, on health care. I don't have that opportunity. I have 40 seconds left.

What I will highlight, as quickly as I can: Years ago, angioplasty was established in Thunder Bay, for the first time in the history of northern Ontario: 700 people a year, lives saved; jobs created; better health care in northern Ontario at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. An angioplasty program: people not having to come to southern Ontario to receive that life-saving service.

We very recently announced with the Minister of Health, on top of the angioplasty program, that very soon, within the next few years, we will have established a cardiac surgery program to complement that stand-alone angioplasty program.

Very significant investments in northern Ontario. The list is much longer, Speaker, and I'm sorry that my time is up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I'm pleased to get up to talk to the members opposite. I look at some of the major achievements that they are talking about: the bridge over the Nipigon River that fell up, as they say, and how smart that was. But \$106 million—we got a 42-day life on it before we're back doing major repairs.

Mistakes happen and people have to live with that, but here's a case where you're building a huge monstrosity. It's fine to twin the highway, build another bridge beside the other one and build another 10 somewhere else.

That's the way Ontario used to be. It used to add practical infrastructure and get results. I know that we're spending a little more money—\$600 million a year; probably the number is wrong. This government is collecting almost \$70 billion—billion—more a year, and they can scrounge out a few million dollars extra for northern Ontario? It doesn't make sense.

At the same time, we see life in Ontario getting much, much more expensive. Hunting licences and health care are going up. We see seniors paying more. We see driving costing us more.

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The only places I've seen health care improvements is where the community has raised money and actually funded their own projects. Unfortunately, too often we see, a year or two later, the facilities being shut down, like they were in Winchester, where we completed a major reconstruction or addition. The ICU is closed. Some of the doctors say that the doors are chained shut. These things are under two years old. Look at the money we put into that, and that's the result. Meanwhile, we have money to pay for political things like the gas plants—wasted billions—but we can't operate our health care units.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on some of the feedback about this budget. I just want to say to the member from Kitchener Centre that the people of Waterloo region know why I will not be supporting, why we can't support this budget. They're not buying the rationale around the sell-off of Hydro One. They are certainly not buying the fact that this government says that they want to do something about poverty reduction, when the budget says that they're going to do something about clawing back the child tax benefit for those on social assistance, those people who are living in poverty. The people know that I would never support this cowardly clawback, which the minister actually admitted exists right now, but they're going to take another year to look at it. Even the regional chair for our region calls the talk around these transit options "aspirational." We have to adopt, even, some of the language that this government is using.



Quite honestly, the budget consultation process was a flawed process because this government did not listen. Class 1, a company from Waterloo region, came. They made a compelling, smart, intelligent case for infection prevention in health care. This government didn't listen to that. They're not interested in the sort of feedback that is smart and intelligent and actually makes sense.

Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Kitchener Centre: If she wants the assistance of her MPP to actually hold this Liberal government to account on those environmental, on those transit, on those poverty reduction options, then she should call her MPP. I'd be more than happy to help her with that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** It's a real pleasure for me to have a couple of minutes to comment on the debate that's taken place here over the last 20 or 30 minutes and some of what we've heard in this House.

I want to begin by acknowledging that on this side the member from Kitchener Centre, the Minister of Labour and, of course, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry all spoke very eloquently, as those of us on this side of the chamber do on a frequent basis, about our plan to build up this province of Ontario.

I want to specifically highlight that my friend the Minister of Natural Resources, the member from Thunder Bay, represents a community—for those interested in hockey trivia and history, he represents the community that gave birth to three players who played at the same time for the Toronto Maple Leafs. They were known as the "Flying Forts"—

**Interjection:** Same line.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** —on the same line—the "Flying Forts" from Fort William, east end of Thunder Bay, I believe it was: Gus Bodnar, Gaye Stewart and Bud Poile. That's a member proud of his community's history and the legacy they left.

The other thing that's interesting to note in terms of historical significance: Today, for those who don't know—and I know this because I am the father of two young children, an 8-year-old and a 4-year-old, two daughters. Today is known in many parts of the world, and certainly in parts of North America, as Dr. Seuss Day, for those who don't know. Dr. Seuss is one of my favourite political philosophers. I've got to tell you, when I think of Ontario budget 2016 and our plan to build the province up, it reminds me of one of my favourite quotes from Dr. Seuss: "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose." It is clear when you look at the Ontario budget that this government and this Premier collectively have those brains in our heads. We are moving this province in a particular direction.

When I listen to members of the Conservative Party and I listen to members of the NDP, it puts me in mind of another quote from Dr. Seuss: "Fantasy is a necessary ingredient in living; it's a way of looking at life through the wrong end of a telescope." I think for those watching

at home, they understand that that resonates with respect to what the members of the opposition say on a regular basis as it relates—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thanks so much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I thank you for the opportunity to add this contribution.

We heard some accusations from the other side a few minutes ago. Our leader stood up for northern Ontario today, and the member across the aisle, the Minister of Natural Resources, said there was something wrong with what our leader, Patrick Brown, said; that the fees are not being increased. This is the minister saying this.

I will read page 191 from the budget, where it says, "Starting in 2017-18, fees will be adjusted annually to keep up with inflation...." Examples of the fees include "fees charged for driver and vehicle licensing, camping in Ontario parks, fishing and hunting licences, court applications, liquor licences and event permits." The list of what these guys are taxing goes on and on and on.

I would have hoped that somehow, somewhere the minister himself would have had some inclination that his own department has fees that are going up. You would think that if you're going to make an accusation, at least you could be marginally accurate. That would be a shock to have this government be even marginally accurate once.

That indicates overall the fact that nobody on that side either has read the budget or—they certainly don't understand the budget because they don't understand the pain that they are inflicting on the people of Ontario with the fees that are going up.

As I said in the national media, they are now digging in the couch for nickels and dimes when they've got parks and hunting and fishing licences going up. They're hurting northern Ontario. Our leader, Patrick Brown, stood up for northern Ontario and I say thank you to him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry has two minutes.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank all the members who have spoken.

One of the other points I did not have an opportunity to respond to, in terms of what has occurred in northern Ontario—a bit of a train wreck that was left for us by the outgoing Conservative government in 2003—was the issue in health care around orphaned patients.

When we came to government in 2003, in my community of Thunder Bay-Atikokan, there were 35,000 orphaned patients; that is, patients who did not have access to a primary care provider in my community of Thunder Bay-Atikokan. Think about it: 35,000 orphaned patients in one city in northern Ontario. I'm sure at some point the leader of the official—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. When I stand, you sit. Stop the clock. I would like the member from Nipissing to cut it back a bit, please. I'll determine who sits and who stands.

Go ahead.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Speaker, thank you very much.

I feel the need to repeat: 35,000 orphaned patients did not have access to a primary care provider in the city of Thunder Bay when we came to government in 2003. This is underpinned, of course, by the fact that we've hired about 5,600 more doctors, that we've hired about 24,000 more nurses, give or take; the fact that 10,800 of those nurses are RNs and, in fact, that in this budget we increased the funding for nurse practitioners.

Why is it important that I talk about nurse practitioners? It's important because we created the nurse practitioner clinic model and the nurse practitioner clinic model is going a long way to helping us reduce that number of orphaned patients that exist primarily—not only, but primarily—in northern Ontario communities.

It's a great service model; people love it. We committed to creating 25 nurse practitioner clinics all across northern Ontario. There are approximately three, maybe four, in Thunder Bay. That model, Speaker, I can tell you, is a spectacular success. The nurse practitioner investment this budget brings forward is helping bring the 35,000 orphaned-patient-legacy number from the Conservatives down and we're—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you.

Before I read this, if this continues the way we're going—certain individuals know who they are—we're going to start warning once and then we're going to start

naming. That's it, folks. The Speaker has had enough. That goes for everybody.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one-half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Minister of Transportation?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** No, Speaker.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Speaker, no further business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The Minister of Transportation has moved adjournment of the House?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I move adjournment of the House.

**Interjection:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

**Interjections:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I heard some nays. I believe the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

*The House adjourned at 1740.*



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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
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<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
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Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 3 March 2016

Jeudi 3 mars 2016

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 March 2016

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 mars 2016

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S  
FIRST RESPONDERS ACT  
(POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS  
DISORDER), 2016

LOI DE 2016 D'APPUI  
AUX PREMIERS INTERVENANTS  
DE L'ONTARIO (ÉTAT DE STRESS  
POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 23, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail et la Loi sur le ministère du Travail relativement à l'état de stress post-traumatique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be deferred to after question period today.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

## 2016 ONTARIO BUDGET

### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2016

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** First, I'll be splitting my time with the great member from Leeds–Grenville. It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 173, the budget measures act or, as the government likes to call it, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act.

Mr. Speaker, I read the title because that's exactly where I want to start today, the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Before I do that, it's important not to forget the jobs of the past. There are more than 350,000 manufacturing jobs lost under this government—the thousands of people working in the mining and forestry sectors in the north, or the thousands of nurses and health care workers let go because of the negligent freeze on hospital spending.

Even within that context, the government has the nerve to table a budget talking about jobs of today and tomorrow. But let's look at the jobs of today. I direct your attention to page 247 of the budget document, Mr. Speaker. There it shows the newly adjusted job creation forecasts for the coming year. This budget revealed that the province will see 76,000 fewer jobs—fewer jobs—created between 2015 and 2019 than they thought last year. Further, page 246 reads "weaker-than-expected employment growth" until 2019.

Ce n'est pas seulement que moins d'emplois seront créés, c'est la perte d'emplois qui existent déjà.

The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is slated to force 54,000 Ontarians to lose their jobs in the next few years. That's not fear mongering, Mr. Speaker. That's straight from the Ministry of Finance's own internal documents.

Que ce soit le Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario, le nouveau système de plafonnement et d'échange qui prend de l'argent, dont je parlerai bientôt, ou les hausses des frais d'énergie, la vie est plus difficile sous ce gouvernement, et il pousse les emplois hors de la province.

The budget may be called Jobs for Today and Tomorrow, but it's really a clever way of saying that jobs that exist today won't tomorrow.

It is that very concern that I have for workers and families in Ontario that brings me to our party's three budget asks.

Ce sont des simples demandes que nous pensons que les gens de l'Ontario méritent de voir dans le budget mais que le gouvernement a choisi d'ignorer.

(1) Include a credible plan to make energy more affordable and to stop the fire sale of Hydro One.

(2) Stop the damaging cuts to our health care system in this province and properly manage health care.

(3) Include a credible plan—not a stretch goal, a credible plan—to balance the budget, including immediate action to pay down the debt; a debt, I remind you, of a staggering \$308 billion.

But, when the Minister of Finance was asked what he thought about these three budget asks, he said, "That's quite a fiscal fantasy world." I don't think an Ontario where residents can afford to pay their hydro bills is a fantasy world. I don't think a properly funded health care

system, and a properly managed health care system to boot, is an impossible task for this government. And I surely don't think a balanced budget is lunacy.

We asked for a credible plan to make energy more affordable; instead, we got \$2 a month worth of energy rebates coming from the cap-and-trade money collected from the very people who will get the rebate. It's a classic bait and switch—not to mention the fact that hydro bills went up roughly \$100 January 1. This new rebate won't even cover the last Liberal hydro hike. That's not a credible plan.

We asked for a properly managed health care system. We've continued to say that the Liberal government's history of scandal, waste and mismanagement is taking funds away from essential services. This budget is no exception. This budget fails to reverse current and planned cuts to doctors, nurses and hospitals, all at the expense of patients. Not only are there no plans for more funding for long-term-care beds, which could help manage the system better, or for restoring funding for physiotherapy for seniors when we've seen falls spike at long-term-care facilities, but this budget also makes medication more unaffordable for most seniors.

We asked for a credible plan when it comes to dealing with having a balanced budget. Budget 2016 is simply a laughable response to that demand. They took \$850 million out of the rainy day contingency fund to reduce the deficit. Over \$1.1 billion was taken from the Hydro One revenue, which, by the way, the government had said again and again was for infrastructure. And the one-time \$2.6-billion departure tax on the Hydro One sale was used against the deficit, despite the fact that the government said a hundred times that it was being used for infrastructure.

0910

Mr. Speaker, the future plan needs better planning. We need a government that sees the big picture. The government claims they're on track to balance the budget by 2017-18, but they also claim that they'll bring in \$4 billion more in revenue than the Financial Accountability Officer said was even possible under best case scenarios. Let me stress that: The office that the government created to verify their figures so the public can have confidence in their figures—that independent oversight—is saying that their numbers are wrong. It is saying that the government's numbers are \$4 billion rosier in revenue than they should be. That should be astonishing to everyone in Ontario, because it says that the government's numbers don't add up. And if I'm going to trust someone—the Financial Accountability Officer, a non-partisan oversight office, or the Minister of Finance, who has a history of making mistakes on his numbers—I'm going to trust the Financial Accountability Officer.

This budget is simply another Liberal tax-and-grab. The budget forecasts an additional \$3 billion in tax revenue alone: \$1.9 billion in personal income taxes, \$700 million in corporate taxes and \$500 million through cap and trade. Doesn't this government ever get tired of imposing new taxes and taking more from Ontarians? If

the tax increases weren't enough, this budget increases virtually every other government service fee. Fees for driver and vehicle licensing are going up. The price of cigarettes and wine will increase. Camping in provincial parks and fishing and hunting licences just got more expensive. Everything from liquor licences to even event permits for charities will cost more. It's that easy: This budget makes life more expensive for everything; this budget makes life harder for Ontario. It's for all these reasons the PC Party has serious problems with this Liberal budget.

Les chiffres ne correspondent pas. C'est de la fumée et des miroirs à son meilleur.

All we requested was a budget that did what Ontarians expect, want and deserve. Ontarians expect a government to look after their tax dollars, not squander them on everything from gas plants to computer systems. Ontarians want a government that makes life more affordable, not harder. And Ontarians deserve to see the whole picture. When I say "the whole picture," I'm referring to the asterisk that hangs over every Liberal promise in this budget.

The Liberal government will tell you that the budget funds for health care are unfrozen, showing that hospitals get \$345 million in new funding, but that's not the whole picture. Hospital budgets have been frozen for the last four years despite more patients—150,000 new patients—and inflation.

Dans ma circonscription de Simcoe-Nord, Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital a dû réduire le nombre de lits de soins continus, éliminer son hôpital de jour gériatrique et couper 20 infirmières à temps plein.

In fact, the Ontario Nurses' Association details that 770 nurses were cut—lost their jobs—by this government in 2015 alone. As a result, patient care is suffering.

But it's not just the past that needs to be discussed. Every give in this budget comes with a take. I'll be very specific about what I mean when I say that every give in this budget comes with a take. The health care take is on page 289—the government wanted to hide it and make sure that no one noticed it. Page 289 quietly shows hospital revenue from gaming—\$107 million that hospitals depended on—gone. The changes to hospital parking: Although providing much relief to patients, and we applaud the help to families, hospitals lose \$28 million. It's just switching envelopes. It's smoke and mirrors.

So when the Liberals say they have increased funding for hospitals by \$345 million, what they're really saying is that they've increased it by \$210 million despite a much more significant demand. While I applaud them for breaking their self-imposed funding freeze on the health care system in Ontario, this is simply a band-aid solution. It's not dealing with the better management that we have been suggesting is needed in the health care system.

Nous avons besoin de plus qu'une solution pansement pour améliorer l'état sombre des soins aux patients dans cette province.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just hospitals that are being duped; it's seniors, too. This budget announces that the



shingles vaccine will be free for those between the ages of 65 and 70. If you're in that age bracket, that's great news; if you're not, too bad. But it's not just age limits that are penalizing seniors in this budget; it's also the ability to pay for their much-needed medications that keep them healthy and out of the hospital. For seniors in the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, their deductible will increase by \$70, nearly double, unless they are low-income. What's low-income to this government? A senior making under \$19,000 is low-income. The notion that a senior making \$19,500 can afford these exorbitant increases in their medications, the fact that this government thinks a senior making \$19,500 is affluent and rich is just ridiculous. The Premier has already acknowledged that this threshold was far too low.

Peut-être que si le gouvernement libéral avait consulté les Ontariens sur le budget, ils auraient réalisé cela plus tôt, mais je vais revenir sur ça plus tard.

Back to seniors, Mr. Speaker: Not only will they have to pay nearly twice what they've been paying now as a deductible but they're also going to have to pay an extra dollar every time they get a prescription filled. Seniors don't have a choice but to take their medication. We're not talking about efficiencies or buzzwords; we're talking about the health of our elderly. Government should be there to take care of those who need our help and make their lives easier, not more unaffordable.

This government claims the shingles vaccine will give some seniors a one-time \$170 savings, but they fail to mention that most seniors will be paying a minimum of \$70 a year more for drugs plus an extra dollar for every prescription. This government has made life harder for the vast, vast majority of seniors.

And it's not just the cost of prescription drugs that is increasing. Seniors are already being hit with high hydro rates, especially those who have more serious conditions that require assistance to help them enjoy life. For example, should a senior who has poor circulation and has to keep their heat up be paying more for that heat? Should a senior with an at-home dialysis machine be paying peak rates? Health care can't be turned on and off whenever it's convenient for the government.

But it's not just energy rates or drug costs, Mr. Speaker. This government took it a step further by cancelling the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit used by seniors to make their homes more accessible. So, sure, some seniors may save \$170 on a free shingles vaccine, but every senior in Ontario will lose on renovations, prescription drugs and energy costs. The moral of the story is: If you're a senior in Ontario, your costs are going up because of this Liberal government.

Comme je le disais plus tôt, chaque chose donnée est livrée avec une « prise ». Ce budget, tout simplement, va rendre la vie plus difficile pour les personnes âgées de l'Ontario.

Whether it's seniors or health care funding, the government isn't telling the whole story. It's the same thing when it comes to the hallmark of their budget 2016: free tuition, as they call it, for students from families with

under \$50,000 in annual income. Mr. Speaker, our party supports increased access to post-secondary institutions, as everyone would. Easier access to education is a noble goal to pursue. The reality is that students in Ontario are already faced with the highest tuition rates in Canada. I repeat, students in Ontario are faced with the highest tuition rates in Canada, and 70%—70%—of the families are not eligible for the full benefit.

While Ontario students should be able to choose a career path that best suits them, there are certainly skills gap challenges needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow, and this government doesn't address it. We must address the skills gap, which is costing Ontario's economy \$24.3 billion a year in forgone revenue and is forcing young Ontarians out of the province to find work.

0920

I read one survey that said 52% of engineering and infrastructure firms have to hire young people from outside Ontario because we don't graduate them here. This government is not willing to have that conversation. How about graduating young people for the jobs that exist in Ontario today?

When I speak about the full picture, whether it be on health care, jobs or deficit reduction, I truly believe the government should have understood the people of Ontario better. And they would have, if they'd actually listened—if the pre-budget consultations weren't simply for show.

This government had the audacity to tour around the province—mind you, on taxpayer dollars—to hear concerns from concerned Ontarians without even waiting for that committee to produce a report on its findings. It's unbelievable that they would use taxpayer dollars to go out and listen, and never bother to let the committee write the report. It's shameful. We all know that this budget had to be written well in advance. After all, it's 340 pages and had to be translated into French. That means that for it to be have been ready on February 25, it would have had to have been completed weeks before.

What about the feedback that this budget should be have been informed by? What about that consultation? This government is slow to act on many issues, yet they're telling us that on the most important document of the year they were unable to reflect and hear the concerns that they said mattered to them—so hypocritical.

C'est évident que ce budget a été imprimé sans les opinions des Ontariens à l'esprit.

I've knocked on countless doors and visited every corner of this province and I've never heard a single Ontarian, in my riding of Simcoe North or elsewhere, say that they want seniors to pay more for prescription drugs. I've never met a single Ontarian who said that they want the government to announce action on the Ring of Fire three separate times but never actually spend a dollar on the project. I've never met a single Ontarian who says that they want our province's debt levels to be beyond \$300 billion. Mr. Speaker, this government is truly out of touch with the people of Ontario.

However, we in the PC caucus are listening to Ontarians relentlessly. In fact, at our convention this weekend, we will be launching our policy process. We plan to go to every corner of the province and listen—not listen for show like the government does, but listen to engage the grassroots, to engage stakeholders, to engage individuals on the front lines. That's what real leadership is about. It's about treating the people of Ontario with respect and attention. It's about taking their concerns to Queen's Park and advocating for the constituents who put you there.

Je suis fier de dire que notre parti prendra en compte les points de vue réels des gens de l'Ontario, pas seulement les vues de quelques initiés libéraux qui veulent prendre soin de leur propre survie politique.

That being said, if I may, I want to go back to the fiscal situation of the province. We have a debt that has eclipsed \$300 billion for the first time in the history of any province in Canada. It's scary—not just Ontario, but any province. In fact, we're the most indebted state or province in the world. It's astonishing. That is their legacy to future generations.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It compromises everything.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** It compromises absolutely everything. It takes away our fiscal capacity to support what we care about in health care and education and the environment. We pay roughly \$11.8 billion in interest payments alone. That's almost \$1 billion a month in interest payments. That's more than we spend on our colleges or universities, which are apparently Liberal priorities, but they've removed the ability to support them. It's more than we spend on our children and youth or agriculture. It is 22 times more than we spend on the environment.

We need to get our debt and deficit under control. We need a province that has its fiscal house in order so that we can fully invest in the things that Ontario need—not just band-aid solutions to systemic problems; I'm talking about efforts to improve the errors in the system, to improve our transportation corridors and to create less red tape. We have 354,000 regulations. We are the capital of red tape in Canada.

We need to have affordable energy so we can create an environment where businesses can flourish, where we can create jobs, where if you're an investor, you want to be in Ontario. We can't waste \$11.8 billion a year on one hand and expect to have money to support the services Ontarians need and deserve on the other. When we are wasting that much money a year on interest payments, it's unacceptable. It has left no room—no room—to support the social infrastructure of our province. This province is left with no choice but to turn to new taxes and sources of revenue, and that's what we see in this budget.

Whether it's toll roads on lanes and highways that people and families in Ontario have already paid for, or whether it's the new cap-and-trade cash grab that doesn't even contain guarantees that the money will actually go to reducing emissions, it's getting to be too much. It's not just the income taxes and corporate taxes I referred to earlier that the government is taking more in on; it's increased taxes on a bottle of wine, and the reduction of

several important tax credits—because the notion of giving Ontarians a break is not something this government would entertain.

Specifically on cap and trade, Mr. Speaker, I don't know of anyone who trusts this government to invest \$1.9 billion in emission-reducing technology. They have no track record of raising revenue for the proper purposes. They had the health levy, which was the largest tax in Ontario's history. It didn't go to health care; it didn't go to supporting our hospitals. It went to pay for waste and mismanagement.

Climate change is a serious issue that requires a serious response from the government. There is no question about that. But this government has not presented Ontarians with a credible plan to tackle climate change. It's simply photo op environmentalism. Instead, this cap-and-trade cash grab will finance a new Liberal slush fund that lacks any accountability.

While Ontarians are willing to do their part to reduce emissions, it's wrong of this government to raise money in the name of the environment, taking advantage of Ontarians' goodwill on the environment, goodwill in wanting to tackle climate change, simply to be what they call another revenue tool or, as I call it, a cash grab on the backs of Ontario families.

This is the same government that handed out billions in grants, through the Ministry of Economic Development to businesses to create jobs. But they didn't actually keep track of the jobs; that would get in the way of their slush fund. Many businesses, because of Ontario's skyrocketing hydro rates, had to leave this province with that money in hand, the ones that actually got grants. If they can't hand out money to create jobs properly, why would anyone think they can hand out money to reduce emissions properly? They have no track record on this. They have no one's confidence that they can get this right.

Despite this glaring fact, home heating and gasoline are going up 4.3 cents a litre—which will cost Ontarians \$400 a year and another roughly \$450 a year in home heating costs. That's almost \$900 for the average Ontario family. If we're going to pay this type of money to fight climate change, it had better actually be going to fight climate change.

Needless to say, we in the PC Party have some serious concerns with the Liberal track record. This money cannot—I repeat, cannot—be used to pay for past scandals, whether it's gas plants, eHealth or Ornge. This cannot be a revenue tool to make up for this government's incompetence. We will call the government out on it.

That is what this comes down to: It comes down to trust in this government. Throughout my remarks and throughout this budget, we can see that the people of Ontario do not trust this government to get it right.

In the last few weeks, they realized they built a train storage shed too small and that their airport express train was too expensive for the average Ontarian to afford. Sometimes it's the little things that are indicative of how this government manages our affairs.

But the direction of the province and the 2016 budget is no small thing. This is a critical document. This budget



is too important to trust to a government that has been under investigation by the OPP on four different occasions.

Il est trop important pour faire confiance à un gouvernement rempli de scandales, de gaspillage, et de mauvaise gestion. Il est clair que les libéraux rendront la vie plus difficile pour les gens de l'Ontario.

0930

The PC Party won't stand for that, and they certainly won't stand for a budget that has contents that aren't in the best interest of Ontario.

In closing, I want to return to the title, Jobs for Today and Tomorrow.

Il est clair que la direction des libéraux pour l'Ontario ne mènera pas à une augmentation d'emplois et d'investissements dans cette province.

Why? It's simple. The title of the budget is just like the contents within: It doesn't tell the whole story. This is the budget of smoke and mirrors. The title doesn't tell you everything you need to know. So when the people of Ontario, who are smarter than the government gives them credit for, voice their displeasure with this budget and its programs, we'll be here to listen. We will be here to reflect their frustrations, to reflect on the Liberal mistakes, and to ultimately fix them. That's what real leadership is.

In the meantime, I'd encourage the members opposite to take off their rose-coloured glasses for just a moment and see what this budget really is. Again, the budget may be called the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act, but it's really a clever way of saying that the jobs that exist today won't be here tomorrow if we have more of this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Bonjour. It's a real privilege for me to rise and share our caucus' lead-off debate on the government's budget motion with my leader, Patrick Brown.

Off the top, I want to commend my leader; my seatmate, the member from Nipissing; and our entire Ontario PC caucus for their work this week on behalf of Ontarians in exposing the government.

The caucus has done a tremendous job showing that there's more to this budget than the headlines the government is trying to spin. I know from my days in the newspaper business that there's always a story beneath the headline. As we've shown, despite the grand pronouncements that this government has made, the real story in the budget is not good news for retired Ontarians on a fixed income. It's not good news for students or the 350,000 people who have lost a manufacturing job on this government's watch, or, quite frankly, for anyone in need of a doctor, or in hope of trying to find improved health care services for a loved one, or families that are desperate to get a break on their hydro bill so they can make ends meet. For every item the government claims is in there to help, there are increased taxes, increased fees and deep service cuts that more than offset any gains.

In the end, a full reading of the budget, beyond its headline of Jobs for Today and Tomorrow, leads to just one conclusion: This government continues to make life more unaffordable for Ontarians.

Frankly, I would argue that Premier Wynne has reached the same conclusion. Well, she has at least with one item in the budget. She's already made a major flip-flop this week on the budget's plan to nearly double the deductible on prescription drugs for most seniors. Perhaps in the finance minister's rush to get the budget to print, even before public consultation was ongoing, the Premier didn't have a chance to actually read the budget. It gives me a new take on that old line that the government likes to use on opposition politicians every year at budget time: I guess the Premier was in favour of the budget before she actually read it.

I can tell you, when I was in the lockup and I found what the budget had in store for seniors on prescription drug costs, I was absolutely against it. I knew that seniors all across my riding—in Toledo, in Lyndhurst, in Maynard, in Oxford Mills, Prescott and Cardinal—would be outraged. I knew it. I knew it because they told me the struggles that they were having, the struggles to make ends meet, to keep up with the rising cost of life under this government. Only a government so out of touch with the day-to-day struggles of Ontarians, stretching their household budgets tighter and tighter, would consider a senior making \$19,300 to be well off—only a government that out of touch. This is such a disconnect that this Premier has, who actually likes to show—she likes to make a lot of pronouncements that she wants to have conversations, but she doesn't actually listen to what the people are saying to her.

When the Premier found out that her own budget hiked the deductible for the Ontario drug benefit by \$70 a year, do you know what she did? She didn't apologize and promise to fix it. No. She promised to consult more to see if she got it right. That's all she did.

First off, given the sham that the budget timeline made of the pre-budget consultation process, I'm not sure too many seniors will be eager to consult with this government. Really, if this Premier is so disconnected from reality that she needs to check with seniors to see if she got it right in raising the low-income threshold to \$19,300, as our leader said, that's absolutely ridiculous.

The issue of drug costs is just one example of something that you see in every section of budget 2016. It's the same theme over and over again: There's something shiny to attract attention in hopes Ontarians won't notice what's really going on. As I stated earlier, they want to distract your attention. They don't want you to take the time to look.

Again, I just want to compliment my caucus for exposing some of these issues this week. They've done a tremendous job.

For seniors, the headline the government wants you to read is "Free Shingles Vaccine." The real story you need to read in the budget is the hike in drug prices and the loss of the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit.

For students, the government's headline is "Free Tuition." The real story: It's two years away; it only applies to about 30% of students and covers only the average tuition and no other costs; and the government is taking away \$165 million in financial support until it kicks in.

For hospitals, the government proclaims a 1% budget increase. The real story is, it's the first increase, as we all know, that hospitals have had in four years. It doesn't provide any catch-up, and almost one third of that increase—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The member can heckle me all he wants, but one third of that increase is offset by clawing back \$107 million in gaming revenue that previously went to hospitals. They don't want to tell you the whole story.

For the north, the headline the government wants you to see is "\$1 Billion for the Ring of Fire." Meanwhile, the real story is that this is the third time they've included this line in the budget without actually spending a dime.

For farmers—well, the finance minister didn't actually offer anything to Ontario's agriculture sector other than a \$28-million cut. I'll get to that problem and the glaring oversight on the agriculture file a little later in my speech.

I'm so proud of our work on this side of the House in the past week to expose, as my leader said earlier, this bait and switch budget.

I want to put some comments on the record for some of my folks in Leeds–Grenville. Prior to the return of the Legislature, I had the opportunity to hear from some of my constituents. I held a series of pre-budget consultations in very small communities in my riding. Over two days, I held meetings in Gananoque, Seeley's Bay, Merrickville and Spencerville. They were excellent discussions. I ended up sending six pages of recommendations to both the finance minister and the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We know those recommendations were ignored by the government. We know this because, as my leader said this morning, the budget was already drafted by the time I sent my letter to the committee—and I sent it before the deadline. It's clear what was being ignored, because the priorities I heard from people in my riding, in particular in rural Ontario, were certainly not reflected in this budget. I don't think anyone would describe this budget as a rural Ontario-friendly budget.

Even if the government ultimately tuned out the recommendations from my constituents, those meetings were really valuable to me. I found real value in having those four meetings and being able to be engaged with my constituents. It gave me the confidence to know that when I'm speaking here today, I'm speaking for the people that I represent when I stand in my place to tell the government that their priorities are wrong.

The budget speaks to infrastructure commitments but does nothing to address the concerns raised by local mayors and local council members at my consultation.

They asked for a review of what they describe as the arbitrary manner in which grant program applications are reviewed for municipalities. It leads to a scenario where one municipality is turned down because they're carrying too much debt while the neighbouring township loses out because they don't have enough debt.

**0940**

I think it's like the Goldilocks approach to infrastructure: Municipalities are supposed to somehow get it just right for this government before they actually get a dime from them for their infrastructure. Instead of a lottery, these municipal leaders wanted some substantive changes to the process in the budget so they could better plan for their own spending.

Also in the break, I had a chance to have a wonderful speaking opportunity at a breakfast meeting of the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce. It was a well-attended event. It also gave me a chance to talk about two reports from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, their Emerging Stronger 2016 report and Empowering Ontario, which they released last year.

Now, I'd like to think a government interested in kick-starting our economy and getting Ontario back to work would actually pay attention to some of those reports. Look at the chamber of commerce: They represent 60,000 small and medium-sized businesses. Those, I think, are who we need to engage to get our engine of job creation started again in the province of Ontario.

One of my favourite parts of the Emerging Stronger report is the Ontario Business Confidence Index. It provides some real insight into what these businesses are feeling as we head into the new year. As I told my chamber, the results for 2016 are not encouraging, and they reflect a clear desire by the business community to see our province go in a different direction. Actually, there's quite a disconnect in the confidence index. On one hand, it's encouraging to learn—here's the statistic: 62% of those surveyed expressed confidence in their business's economic outlook. That's slightly up from about 58% last year. It's a positive sign that businesses feel good about what they've done internally to position themselves for growth.

Unfortunately, that's where the good news ends. When it comes to expressing confidence in Ontario's economy, just 30% like what they see going into 2016. It's down from 47% last year. It's actually quite a shocking decrease in just a 12-month period. Frankly, it's a condemnation of this government's performance. And with that lack of confidence, it's no surprise that the survey revealed only 46% of businesses have plans to expand in 2016. That's down from 54% last year: Again, it's headed in the wrong direction.

What should be the take-away for us as legislators on this report? When nearly two thirds of our businesses feel good about the situation but they're hedging their bets on Ontario, that's a message that the government's budget needs to do something different.

The reason businesses lack confidence in our economy is the result of what's happened on this government's



watch over the past 13 years. Sadly, more of the same is found within the pages of the budget we're debating this morning. There's not much here to inspire confidence in Ontario. Heck, the government isn't even inspired; they've reduced their own job creation projections by 16% over last year. Last year, they boasted our economy would create 93,000 jobs in 2016. Now that number is down to 78,000. I always say that well-run businesses want to invest in well-run jurisdictions, and as we know, the words "well run" are two words I don't think you'd ever use to describe Ontario under the Liberal Party.

Our leader outlined in his portion of this morning's leadoff the three asks that our PC caucus wanted to see in the government's budget. I think he did a great job outlining them so I'm not going to go into detail on them again. One of those asks was a credible plan to balance the budget. It goes to the very heart of that reluctance businesses surveyed by the Ontario chamber have when it comes to investing here and creating jobs. They're not going to be fooled by the so-called plan to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 tabled by the finance minister last week. These businesses wouldn't try to build their own budget by overestimating revenues as this government has done to the tune of \$4 billion. For those watching at home, that's not our caucus saying they've overestimated what they'll take in; that's in the words of the Legislature's Financial Accountability Officer.

Then we have the inevitable \$1.9-billion increase in personal income taxes factored into the government's calculations. The rest of their so-called plan is cobbled together using \$850 million from a provincial contingency fund and, confirming what we've been saying all along, taking revenue from the sell-off of Hydro One. As I told the chamber that morning, any business owner knows you can't fix your bottom line by selling off your business assets. Eventually, you're going to run out of things to sell. That's what's truly amazing here, Speaker.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** They get mad over there when we expose the truth.

For all the wishful thinking, tax grabbing and asset selling contained in this budget, it still doesn't solve the problem with all that red ink. That's because we now have a structural deficit, one they've managed to paper over with some one-time infusions of cash. As a result, we're still going to watch this year as the province's total debt climbs past the \$300-billion mark for the first time, on its way to a staggering \$308 billion. To put that into perspective, Speaker, that's \$22,103 for every man, every woman and every child in this province. And unfortunately, it's growing. It's shameful.

I can tell you that improving the confidence of our business sector and recruiting new ones to come here doesn't start with being the world's most indebted sub-national. That means, even if the deficit is eliminated, interest payments on our debt remain the third-largest spending item in this budget. As I told the president of St. Lawrence College, Glenn Vollebregt, when he was at my speech at the Brockville chamber, how do you build a

workforce for tomorrow when the budget for training, colleges and universities is \$3.6 billion less than interest on the debt?

You don't inspire confidence by refusing to get serious about the soaring cost of electricity in this province. I mentioned earlier the Ontario chamber's Empowering Ontario report. I know the Minister of Energy likes to debunk any criticisms and concerns we raise about how the cost of electricity is driving businesses and industry out of the province and people from their homes. I want people to understand we're not responding to information. The opposition is not just simply making this up, Speaker. Our questions and concerns about Hydro One and the cost of electricity are based on reports from the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer and the Ombudsman. Those are all independent, non-partisan officers of this Legislature, and they've exposed mismanagement of the energy sector and have let Ontarians know that rates are going to rise, as we've said many times in this House, 42% between 2013 and 2018. Remember, that's on top of the already highest rates in North America.

It's those increases, Speaker, that the Ontario chamber's study found will lead to the following—here's a quote from their report: "One in 20 businesses in the province expect to close their doors in the next five years due to rising electricity prices. In addition, 38% will see their bottom line shrink, with the cost of electricity delaying or cancelling investment in the years to come."

Again, you'd think that an independent report like the one from the chamber would lead the government to provide cost relief in the electricity sector, and it should be in this budget. Instead, homeowners got nothing other than, basically—we've said it in the House—a \$2-a-month reduction. It pales in comparison to the \$100 increase that they're facing because of rates. In terms of small business and industry, they don't even get that. This budget offers no relief; it just offers more of the same. The take-away is that the government is happy to watch those businesses surveyed by the chamber close their doors and throw more people out of work.

I just want to take a moment to speak to something that really shocked me in regard to this report. It was the Minister of Energy's response to the chamber of commerce Empowering Ontario report. The executive director of the chamber in Brockville, Pam Robertson, wrote to me for feedback on the report. She included a letter that the minister gave the chamber as part of this correspondence. Here's how he opened his response to the Ontario chamber on their survey and recommendations: "Many of the key aspects of electricity planning and system management were not captured in your report." That sounds to me a lot like his response to the Auditor General. He patted the chamber on the head and said, "This is too complicated for you people to understand." I wrote back to my chamber, "I'd suggest the Ontario chamber and the 60,000 businesses it represents do understand the issue well—because their members are footing an increasingly larger bill for the decisions this

government is making.” It was unbelievable to see that that was Bob Chiarelli’s response.

I want to now turn to something about the budget that is of great concern to the folks back home in Leeds–Grenville. That, of course, is that the budget absolutely ignores the rural communities and the province’s agricultural sector. Actually, I should correct my record. We would be better off if they ignored ag instead of cutting the budget by \$28 million.

0950

That cut to OMAFRA’s budget is from the same government, remember, whose Premier in 2013 challenged Ontario’s agri-food sector to create 120,000 new jobs by 2020—the same Premier who, a year after issuing that challenge, stood by as the University of Guelph closed the agricultural colleges in Kemptville and Alfred two years ago this month. They’ve since put no real money on the table to ensure the continued delivery of the agriculture degree and diploma programs at those colleges.

Look, I respect and applaud the work of the municipality of North Grenville and what they’re trying to do to revitalize the Kemptville campus. But I maintain today, as I have since March 12, 2014, when the closure of Kemptville College was announced, that those degree and diploma programs must be brought back. That’s the only way to do it. It’s not just to ensure that the campus has a future—but a guarantee that we’re producing the educated graduates in agri-food in Ontario that we need, to compete in that global economy. But there’s nothing in the budget for those programs, which are so vital to helping the agri-food sector meet the Premier’s 120,000-job challenge.

On the electricity front, rural Ontarians are hit the hardest by the soaring costs of hydro, because they pay higher delivery charges. But again, the OFA’s request for a farm industrial rate was ignored in the budget. I guess that 120,000-job challenge from the Premier was just another one of her stretch goals.

As for our agriculture critic, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, he noted in a question this week to the minister that there’s just one reference to agriculture in the budget. It’s on page 346, the very last page of the document—almost an afterthought, I might suggest to the House today. But I was quite intrigued by the reference, because it concerns value-added farm activities and the property taxes that penalize farmers for investing in them. When a farmer, for instance, wants to create a product from what’s produced on the farm, the portion of their property used for that activity is taxed at the industrial rate. Talk about a disincentive for the farmer.

I raised this issue in question period and a late show in November 2013, in relation to a pair of farm operations in Leeds–Grenville: Bushgarden Farmstead Cheese in Rideau Lakes, and Edgewood Farms in Elizabethtown–Kitley. I told the story then, Speaker, of Nigel Smith, the artisan cheese maker, and what he went through to finally get his operation off the ground so he could start making world-class cheeses. It’s an incredible story of perseverance. Nigel spent three and a half years fighting this

government’s red tape to make it happen. When the big day finally came and he did put out that “open for business” sign, the first person down the laneway wasn’t a customer. It was MPAC, with news that his artisan operation was being classified as industrial and he’d be paying an additional \$1,200 in property taxes.

Over at Edgewood Farms, Terry and Dave McGurrin were forced to close their pancake house due to harassment by MPAC. They demanded they pay year-round commercial taxes for a six-week operation. And if that wasn’t enough, MPAC showed up after the pancake house was shut down, to grill Terry about why she still owned a cash register.

This disgusting treatment of value-added farm activities by MPAC is something I’ve been sounding off on for about two years.

But even after all that time, budget 2016 is a disappointment because it doesn’t outline how the problem is actually going to get fixed. No, all the agri-food sector gets is a promise—another promise—to try to work out the solution.

I’d like to pick up the phone and make a phone call to both Nigel Smith and the McGurrins. I’m hopeful a solution is coming, but I know this government all too well, Speaker. Frankly, even if I did make the call, I don’t think they’d believe me, with this government.

On this file, I challenge the government: Follow through on your word. Don’t just put empty rhetoric in the budget. Actually move forward in the agri-food sector and recognize these on-farm-premise operations.

Speaker, the lead this morning by my leader talked about this government’s waste, their mismanagement and their scandal on a scale that I think is just unprecedented in our province’s history. Billions are wasted on gas plants, eHealth, Ornge, SAMS and, up next, a carbon tax scheme that promises to be this government’s latest debacle.

As I said in the media after the budget was tabled last week, what worries me is that this government has no idea how their plan will reduce carbon emissions. They can’t tell us anything about it. But what they’ve got all revved up, Speaker, are the details that they’re going to add 4.3 cents a litre to the cost of gasoline, which is so typical of this government—to figure out how to separate people from their money first and then worry about everything else after.

I heard the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change mention this week how he hopes that the increased cost of gas will lead more people to ride their bicycles to work. I’ll be sure, this weekend, to share his advice with the folks in my riding who commute from Brockville to Ottawa or to Kingston to work. That’s the kind of advice you get from a government that tables a budget that continues to grow the debt that has increased by 91% in a decade.

Think about it for a moment, about having someone try to commute in a rural riding where there’s no infrastructure there to be able to support that. Think about the mismanagement of this government—so reckless that a



\$139-billion debt when they took over in 2003 has ballooned to \$308 billion. Even a moderate level of incompetence over that time would leave more of that \$11.7 billion in interest payments to go towards front-line services.

We hear government members always heckling us in opposition that we want it both ways. They say we want to balance the books while asking for improved hospital and home care services, more affordable electricity and investments in our rural communities. But it's not an either/or proposition. We can do both, but only if we have a government that understands how to manage this province in the best interests of Ontarians—not the kind of government Ontario has today. They don't make life easier for Ontarians, particularly for those of us who live with a rural postal code.

This budget offers more proof that life is harder under the Liberals. But there is some good news: People are getting wise to this government, and increasingly we're hearing from every corner of the province that Ontarians won't be fooled again.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? Further debate? The member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Just by tradition, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Timmins–James Bay has moved adjournment of the debate. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing as there's no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

*The House recessed from 0957 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I want to welcome the parents of page Richard Fan. His mother, Cherry Liu, and father, Jeffrey Fan, are here this morning and I'm looking forward to our lunch together.

Aussi, je veux prendre ce temps pour accueillir tous les élèves francophones de la 11<sup>e</sup> et 12<sup>e</sup> année qui sont avec nous aujourd'hui. Ces élèves, de partout en Ontario, sont à Queen's Park pour le Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario. Bienvenue, chers étudiants et étudiantes, à Queen's Park. Je veux dire un petit « shout-out » à Geneviève et Sylvain de la FESFO. Merci d'être venus.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** De la part du caucus NPD et de notre chef, M<sup>me</sup> Horwath, on aimerait, de la part de toute l'Assemblée, féliciter les jeunes qui ont été capables de venir travailler dans notre Parlement aujourd'hui. On leur souhaite une très belle session qu'ils vont avoir débutant ce soir.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Mr. Speaker, please help me welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I would like to welcome all the dietitians who are here today. In particular, Leslie Whittington-Carter is from my riding, and my niece Anne Fougere is down from my riding and is also a dietitian. Welcome.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I would like to welcome the family of today's page captain Xavier Hollott-Lo: Ms. Chloe Hollott-Lo and Mr. Maxx Hollott. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to welcome today, here with the francophone youth Parliament, a constituent of mine: Julien Leclerc from Jeanne-Lajoie school in Pembroke.

**M. Michael Mantha :** C'est avec grand plaisir que j'introduis un gentilhomme du Nord, défenseur de l'éducation, M. Larry French.

**M. Grant Crack:** C'est un grand plaisir pour moi de souhaiter la bienvenue à tous les étudiants qui sont ici aujourd'hui pour participer au Parlement jeunesse, et aussi à Jean-Sébastien Boyer, Jérémie Racine, Véronique Bureau Mortimer, Loïc-Arnaud Plouffe et Nataniel Quenneville, de Casselman et Hawkesbury.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Along with the other fellow dietitians that we've welcomed, I want to especially welcome Atheana Brown, from the City of Kawartha Lakes Family Health Team to Queen's Park. Welcome, Atheana.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I would like to welcome a number of dietitians from my riding of Perth–Wellington to Queen's Park today: Paula Seifried and Jenny Harrison from the Minto-Mapleton Family Health Team; Anna Maria Fruscione from the Star Family Health Team; Teresa Fowler from the Happy Valley Family Health Team; and Jessica Janssens from the Stratford Family Health Team.

**M. Michael Mantha:** Encore une fois, c'est avec grand plaisir que je veux introduire un bon jeune homme de Dubreuilville, M. Dany Raymond.

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** C'est tout un honneur, au nom de la section de l'Ontario de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie, de saluer les 85 élèves qui sont ici avec nous pour représenter les futurs politiciens du Parlement jeunesse de la francophonie.

J'aimerais aussi saluer tout spécialement ceux d'Ottawa qui sont avec nous et que j'ai eu le grand plaisir de rencontrer.

Et, monsieur le Président, je suis désolée, mais je vais le faire : un ancien membre est ici présent dans la Chambre, M. Gilles Morin, le député d'Ottawa–Orléans.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, Mr. Lorne Given from the riding of Sarnia–Lambton, a guest of mine here at Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Bienvenue à tous les étudiants du Parlement jeunesse francophone.

I also want to introduce Mrs. Hurley, a dietitian from my riding. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd also like to introduce and welcome to Queen's Park the Dietitians of Canada, who are here with us in the public gallery. Many of them are primary care providers, and we're just so pleased to have them here with us today.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have an introduction, on behalf of the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, for page captain Charlotte Fritz, who's here with her mother, Wendy Ward. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I am delighted to welcome to the Legislature dietitian Marg Alfieri, who is visiting from Kitchener Centre.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome Angela and Heather Massel, from my riding of Kitchener—Conestoga, as well as David and Alicia, as well as the others, for our rare-disease select committee debate today. Thank you for coming.

**M<sup>me</sup> Sophie Kiwala:** Je veux souhaiter la grande bienvenue aux étudiants qui viennent de Kingston et les Îles. Je crois que Nathan est là—bienvenue.

**M. Lorne Coe:** Je veux présenter une étudiante francophone de ma circonscription de Whitby—Oshawa. Son nom est Mélodie Ouellette, et elle est étudiante à l'École secondaire catholique Saint-Charles-Garnier. Elle est ici aujourd'hui avec la délégation du Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I am pleased to be able to welcome Deborah Burton, Gidget Herbet and Janice Muccio, all from York—Simcoe and surrounding areas, for the debate on rare diseases.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I am pleased to welcome grade 10 student Amira Gamute from École secondaire Gaétan-Gervais, who is here with the Parlement jeunesse.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to welcome Maya Chadha, a grade 10 student from London West, who is here for the Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As is the custom of this Speaker, I would like to introduce, in the Speaker's gallery, the member from Carleton East in the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, Monsieur Gilles Morin.

*Interjection.*

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Acting Premier. This government has no credibility. They claim that they listened, but it is clear they did not. No senior in the province of Ontario asked for their drug benefit deductible to be nearly doubled. No parent asked for their child activity tax credit to be cut. No one thought that a toonie would help seniors struggling to pay their \$800 hydro bill.

Why does the middle class have to pay for this government's smoke-and-mirrors budget?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're very proud of the budget that the Minister of Finance presented last week. Clearly, there are several initiatives in that budget that help Ontarians, not least of which is free tuition for low-income families and more affordable tuition for middle-income families. That one initiative alone takes a tremendous burden off middle-income families.

**1040**

We're also creating 110,000 jobs through our \$160-billion infrastructure plan; 110,000 jobs a year are being created because of our investments. I think that helps the middle class.

We're increasing health care funding by \$1 billion—\$1 billion in one year. That's the increase. That's going to help every one of us who accesses our health care system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Acting Premier: The government only tells part of the story. It's important to tell the whole story and actually read the fine print.

In the next two years, this government will take a quarter of a billion dollars from Ontario families by taking away their tax credits. The Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit—gone. That means Ontario seniors will now have to pay \$19 million more to make their homes accessible. Families who have children in sports and arts programs will have to pay another \$65 million. Going to university or college over the next two years—don't be fooled—combined, those students will pay another \$165 million because you're killing the education tax credit.

Robin Hood didn't steal from the hard-working middle class. Why is this government?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Well, Speaker, I'm pleased that the Leader of the Opposition has raised this issue, because we're acting on a recommendation from Don Drummond's commission on the reform of the public sector. One of the things that Don Drummond urged us to do was look at the tax credits that actually cost us a significant amount of money and ask ourselves: Are we achieving the outcomes we had hoped would be achieved with that tax credit?

When it comes to the home renovation tax credit, it actually turns out that not too many people were taking advantage of it, and those who were were people with significant means, and there's a federal tax credit that does the same thing. So, yes, we eliminated that tax credit because it wasn't having the outcome it was intended to have.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Similarly with the Children's Activity Tax Credit, it wasn't having the uptake. It wasn't actually getting kids into sports. It wasn't getting them into recreation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock, please. Before I move to final supplementary, two things: Interjections are starting to rise; I'm going to



bring them down. Number two, I would caution the member on things you cannot say indirectly that you can't say directly. I just caution among the last phrase that he used. So avoid that, please.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Back to the Acting Premier: I appreciate the government's spin, but beyond the smoke and mirrors, the reality is, the middle class is paying more. For every bill and fee they're seeing with this government, it's all going up. That's the reality of this budget. There doesn't seem to be a fee that isn't increasing. Camping, fishing, hunting, court applications, liquor licences, event permits, even for charity—it's all going up. Heating your home and the cost of gas—going up. Everything is going up with this budget.

When will this government realize that they are breaking the backs of Ontario's families? When will you stop this attack on Ontario's middle class?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I guess, Speaker, the new PC Party is against helping those who are facing the greatest challenges. That's, I think, unfortunate. But let's talk about what we are doing to help the middle class.

We're lowering hospital parking fees: 900,000 patients and visitors every year will benefit from lower hospital parking fees. The shingles vaccine—people have been asking us to fund the shingles vaccine and we are moving forward with that in this budget. We're spending \$100 million to help people lower their home energy consumption—\$100 million. I think that's helping the middle class. We're eliminating the \$30 Drive Clean fee. We're continuing to lower auto insurance—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, and what about people on propane?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll start. Member from Renfrew, come to order.

Answer?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —not to mention the 260,000 kids who are taking advantage of full-day kindergarten in Ontario.

## RARE DISEASES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** To the Acting Premier: I'm going to ask for her sincere consideration. I've been clear that the PC caucus will support a good idea no matter where its origin is, no matter where and from what side of the Legislature it comes from. Today, the Liberals have a chance to do the same.

We've been joined by patients and their families struggling with rare disorders. They have travelled here today to show their support for the member from Kitchener-Conestoga and his motion to create a select committee to examine the enormous challenges facing the rare disease community. Will the government put their partisanship aside, recognizing that this will help these families and

help these patients? Will the government support the member from Kitchener-Conestoga in this important motion?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I want to commend the member from Kitchener-Conestoga. He has been a tireless advocate on behalf of individuals in this province who do have rare diseases—and their families and their communities. He has done important work.

I was proud, earlier this week, to meet with many individuals from across the province that do have a rare disease or are advocates or family members of people with rare diseases. It's clear that we need to continue to do more. I announced funding at University Health Network for a particular rare disease, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, and funding for a centre of excellence at University Health Network and, quite frankly, a template that can be used—because it was evolved through an expert panel that we created of clinical experts; patients were part of that process as well. We created a template that I think will be beneficial for other rare diseases as well. I'll be happy to speak more in the supplementals.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplemental: the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Back to the minister: Minister, we've had people from across the province travel here today to mark their support for a united and transparent effort that will finally address rare disease suffering. Year after year, they've watched as the government has turned its back on their pleas for help. They have watched as this government acknowledges their challenges with stopgap measures and one-off announcements that have only prolonged the suffering.

Today I am proposing an all-party select committee process which every one of these people, and the hundreds of thousands they represent, are prepared to stand by. Minister, will you stand with them?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** One of the other aspects of the announcement on Monday—and I have to commend, among others, the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders, that convened on Monday when many individuals, family members and advocates on behalf of individuals with rare diseases came to Queen's Park. I met with them and talked with them about another important initiative that this government has taken. Building on the work that we've done through the expert panel on Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, we are creating a working group that will be focused solely on provincial efforts for rare diseases. It will be comprised of clinical experts—experts in the field. It will be comprised of patients and patient advocates so that we can work on those fundamental issues of prevention, detection, providing the appropriate supports, and access to drugs as well—all of the elements that are important, as a government that we should be providing for these individuals. I am happy to speak once again in the supplemental that I know is coming.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, your working group announcement earlier this week was an acknowledgement of the need for a government response to the heart-wrenching struggles that inaction has allowed to fester for too many years. Later today, you will have the opportunity to build on that acknowledgement by supporting the open, all-party select committee process that has proven successful in leading to informed recommendations that demand government's response.

Minister, don't turn your back on rare disease sufferers. Will you support my motion today, yes or no?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I think that those that have rare diseases and disorders would agree that it's important to have a working group to begin action now, to bring together clinical experts, to bring together patients and patient advocates, to begin to take concrete steps like we did earlier this week in announcing the centre of excellence for a rare disease, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Quoting the Canadian—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Merci.

1050

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** After the government's announcement, COD, the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders, said, "Today, on International Rare Disease Day, the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders (COD) welcomes the announcement made by Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins to open a new clinic ... which could be expanded to other rare disorders, as well as his commitment to strike a working group to develop an Ontario approach to a coordinated provincial health care system for patients with rare disorders."

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday I was in London talking to nurses about health care. Nurse Rebecca Smith told me that her shift at London Health Sciences Centre on Tuesday night was the worst shift she has ever worked in 16 years. There were 21 patients with psychiatric emergencies. Because of Liberal cuts, a hospital boardroom was turned into an overflow room. A hospital boardroom became a room for patients. Other patients were waiting over eight hours to be seen in emergency.

When someone is facing a psychiatric crisis, they deserve care, not an eight-hour wait in a makeshift, converted boardroom, followed by seven days stuck in the ER because there aren't any beds.

When Rebecca left her shift the next morning, there were still 100 people waiting in the ER.

Will the Acting Premier acknowledge that Liberal health care cuts are hurting Ontario's patients?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question.

It wasn't that long ago—a couple of months ago, I think—that I had the privilege and the honour, with the President of the Treasury Board, the MPP for London North Centre, to be in London to announce the commitment by the government of \$1.2 million toward the opening of a new mental health and addictions crisis centre in London that is going to do precisely the important work that the leader of the third party is referring to: providing crisis intervention for adults aged 16 and up living in London and Middlesex county; individuals who are experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis, who require that immediate response or support. They can provide that in the community. It will be run by the Canadian Mental Health Association. It was a great announcement and an important investment.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Regardless of how privileged this health minister is, the psychiatric patients in London are still falling through the cracks.

Those are not the only health cuts that are hurting patients and hurting Ontarians. Last week, without any warning or consultation, struggling seniors across Ontario learned that the Liberals would be nearly doubling their drug costs.

Earlier this week, the Premier of this province had a eureka moment and suddenly decided that she would hold consultations and actually talk to people about her plan to make seniors pay more for prescription drugs. But so far, this Premier and this Liberal government have not promised the seniors of Ontario that anything will actually change.

Will this Liberal government make a clear commitment to seniors that they won't be paying more for their prescription drugs?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, per the question yesterday, I'm still confused as to whether the leader of the third party is asking for more consultation or less consultation. I would hope she would agree, now that we've actually posted the regulation, that it would be the appropriate thing for us to have discussions with seniors and seniors' groups, their advocates and others across the health care spectrum to look at ways that we can make sure we get this right for all seniors.

Of course, our focus in the budget, as the Premier has said, is to bring 170,000 more low-income—the lowest income—seniors into a bracket where they pay no annual deductible.

I plead to the leader of the third party that she just simply reference those 170,000 more seniors who will benefit once. It's an important acknowledgement that they actually care that we're helping those who are most vulnerable to go into that bracket.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We know how confused this minister is, and it's just too bad that it's the patients of Ontario who are paying the price for his confusion.

Liberal health cuts are not just affecting prescription drug costs for seniors and care for psychiatric emergency



patients. On Tuesday, I was at a rally with hundreds of Hamilton nurses sounding the alarm bells about further positions being cut at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton. The meagre funding gestures in the budget were little more than tokens.

Will this government admit to Ontarians that they will continue to see an erosion of their health care system, including more firing of nurses and longer wait times for patients?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We are investing a new \$1 billion into the health care system this year, and we're increasing our hospital funding by more than \$345 million, which represents an over 2% increase to the hospital line in the budget. We're adding new dollars into home and community care: \$250 million. We're adding \$75 million more into hospice and end-of-life and palliative care. We're adding money into mental health supports across this province. We're adding money into a new shingles vaccine that we'll make available free of charge to seniors between the ages of 65 and 70.

There are many, many new investments that add up to \$1 billion more—nearly \$52 billion this year spent on health care. I'm proud of the investments that we're making. They're making a real difference.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Acting Premier. It has taken less than a week for the Premier of this province to acknowledge and admit that her budget has serious flaws. Hospital funding is not keeping up with inflation. It is not keeping up with population growth. It is not keeping up with the pressures and demands of an aging population. This is another serious flaw in their budget that they introduced last week.

Will this Acting Premier admit that what this means to Ontarians is even less health care for them when they need it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, her numbers just don't add up, Mr. Speaker: \$345 million in new funding to our hospitals is a more than 2% increase in the funding that goes to the hospitals. It's more than the rate of inflation. It's more than the consumer price index. It's an important investment.

That's quite separate from the \$12 billion over the next decade that we're investing in new hospitals and improved hospitals, which doesn't even include recently built, announced and opened hospitals like the Humber River Hospital or the new Oakville hospital; the funding that we're providing to hospitals all over the province: Providence Care in Kingston, the Mackenzie Vaughan Hospital for York region, and renovations to acute-care and long-term-care beds at Atikokan General Hospital.

We're also adding to the fund that we have for maintenance and renovation—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You're closing mental health care at St. Joe's.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, second time.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:**—an additional \$50 million in that funding for renovation and maintenance in hospitals.

So our hospitals are growing. Their operating budgets are increasing. We're adding to the capital investments that we're making in our hospitals, and we're seeing the improvements in outcomes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Minister of Health should darn well know what the inflationary pressures are on a hospital, including population growth and an aging demographic. He's not telling the whole facts around what's happening to the pressure in hospitals. Whether it's 1% or 2%, he's splitting hairs on the fact that hospitals are feeling the crunch and they are closing beds. They are firing nurses. They are postponing and cancelling operations and procedures.

Health care is supposed to be about people. That's what health care is supposed to be about. Struggling seniors are being told that they're going to see their medication costs nearly double.

Why is this government attempting to balance the budget on the backs of seniors and patients in Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** A \$1-billion new investment in health care—I know the leader of the third party might believe that our hospitals are the centre of the health care universe. They're an important foundation of our health care system. Perhaps she doesn't want to reform and transform our health care system so it truly is patient-centred, so that it truly does focus on outcomes.

The investments in the transformations that we're making involve our hospitals, and we've reflected that in an additional \$345 million, but we're also moving patients and procedures and opportunities in care and support outside of our hospital environment.

To home and community care: an additional \$250 million in the coming year, which was the new investment that we made this year, as well, in home and community care, as we continue to take advantage of the reality that we can provide support and services.

We're making, and we announced in this year's budget as well, further investments in long-term care.

We're making investments in mental health services—where the evidence shows that the outcomes are better when we actually care for those individuals outside of the hospital environment when we can.

I would hope that the leader of the third—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Final supplementary.

1100

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Yesterday, I heard stories of community care nurses who were finding IV needles still in the arms of patients who were discharged with those needles in their arms. That's the kind of community care that is being provided because the hospitals are overloaded and can't do the kind of job that they want to do.

People expect their health care system—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.

Please finish.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, they also told me of patients who are revolving back into emergency because they're leaving hospitals too sick and they are not getting the kind of community care that they need and they deserve. That is not the kind of transformation that takes care of patients the way that they should be taken care of.

People expect the health care system to be there for them where they need it and when they need it. It is one of the basics that people expect their government to get right. Instead of getting it right, people see fewer nurses, closed hospital beds, cancelled surgeries, overflowing ERs, and more expensive medications for seniors. How has this government lost sight of the fact that health care is supposed to be about people?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora will come to order.

Minister?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, just because she says it doesn't mean it's true.

I think it's important that we look at the facts—the fact that we have some of the best—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The facts include that we have the shortest wait times in all of Canada; we have among the best cancer care in the entire world; we have the best outcomes, and outcomes that are improving. An independent study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences has shown that we are getting, as a result of our changes—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Put some mustard on that baloney.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm not going to accept that. The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

You have 10 seconds.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** With our changes to health care, with our funding reform, an increased number of patients are being treated, a minimal impact on readmission rates and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. That's 10 seconds.

New question.

## ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Today, the Financial Accountability Officer referred to the budget as “vague” and “uncertain.” That's because last week's budget confirmed that the government is using one-time revenues and contingency funds to make the deficit appear smaller.

One example is using one-time money from the brisk housing market: \$500 million in extra sales tax revenue and \$300 million more in land transfer taxes were booked as operating revenue. BMO Capital Markets wrote, “Asset sales of \$5.7 billion ... are one-time in nature, and don't address any underlying structural deficit.”

Speaker, I ask the minister: Why do you continue to use one-time money to artificially lower your deficit?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to begin by thanking the Financial Accountability Officer for his report. The FAO has an important mandate to provide forward-looking commentary. On page 1 of his report, the FAO confirms that we are on target and on schedule to balance the budget by 2017-18: “Ontario's 2016 budget reaffirmed the government's commitment to eliminate the budget deficit by 2017-18, and to maintain a balanced budget going forward.” It's also important to note that the FAO affirms key aspects of our plan. He specifically highlights the fact that our assumptions for new federal funding are prudent.

In our budget preparation process each year, we ask private sector economists to review our assumptions in order to ensure that they're valid. In 2016, it was no different. Three economic experts reviewed our economic forecasts and affirmed that they are reasonable. That's on page 245 of the budget, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Back to the minister: What we didn't hear was that because of using one-time funding, the Financial Accountability Officer also said, “Maintaining balanced budgets beyond 2017 will likely prove challenging.”

This government is so desperate for cash they are threatening to go back as far as 1989 to target commercial entities for land transfer taxes. This is frightening the markets—they see through the desperation—and making Ontario less desirable for investment.

Bryne Purchase, Ontario's former chief economist and deputy at many ministries stated, “The added revenue from cap and trade and the Hydro One sale helped to make the provincial numbers look better.”

Every expert sees through what this government is doing, Speaker.

I ask the minister: Just who do you think you're fooling with this pre-election number fudging?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Guard your language in terms of what you're supposed to say in here, please.

Minister.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In preparation of the document and in preparation of the budget, you take forecasts. We have leading economic forecasters from across the country, over 15 of them, provide their projections. We then take them, average them,



and taper them down. Furthermore, we look at experts and they review them.

Looking at the full outlook period for the 2016 budget, which covers chapters 16 to 19, our government's average nominal GDP forecast is in line with those private sector forecasts. New economic data since the release of our budget confirms the economy is on track and advancing at a relatively robust pace.

Independent advice is important to the government and that is why we indeed value the Financial Accountability Officer's input.

It's important to note the budget assessments by two credit rating agencies, which the member opposite often refers to, and here's what they say—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. We're not going to hear that.

New question.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the minister for seniors affairs. All of us in this House have a duty to stand up for seniors in our ridings, but it's the minister's job to speak up at the cabinet table and ensure all seniors are protected. Speaker, this budget shows that the minister didn't do his job and the Premier didn't listen to the people of Ontario. Instead of helping people, the Liberals have chosen to force most seniors to pay 70% more for their prescription drugs, starting as early as this summer. Every member in this House should know that that's wrong, and this minister should know better than anyone.

People deserve to know: Will the minister for seniors toe the Liberal line or will he do his job and stand up for seniors by telling this Premier she's out of touch with the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. Let me deviate for a second before I answer the question: Tomorrow is the deadline for all the seniors' community groups for submitting the seniors community application grant. I would take the opportunity to advise every member of the House, since we only have another day, to get on with their communities' seniors' groups, because this particular program is huge; 104 ridings out of 107 ridings are benefiting from this program.

I would hope that the members get busy and contact the seniors who we are helping, and I hope that they put in some applications for the benefit of our seniors in every riding of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, again to the minister: I am busy. I am busy worrying about what this Liberal government is doing to seniors' health care.

Here's what the Liberal plan to hike drug costs really means to seniors: It means more worry for seniors on fixed incomes. It means tighter household budgets and less retirement security. It undermines the principle of

universal access to health care, which should include prescription drugs.

Worst of all, it means seniors can't trust the Premier to listen and put their priorities first. Seniors deserve a minister who will speak up for them and say no to the Premier's plan to hike the price on drugs for seniors.

Will the minister commit to seniors today by voting against the Liberal budget that increases costs for Ontario seniors? Do the right thing: Stop the increase in price to seniors' prescriptions today.

1110

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Speaker, as I travel throughout Ontario, seniors' groups are very delighted with what we are giving them to support them, to keep them active and engaged. The budget reflects and builds on what we have been providing for our seniors: \$250 million, as the Minister of Health has mentioned, for health care and community care; \$170 million for seniors between 65 and 70, for the shingles vaccine; an additional \$75 million for three years, for community-based residential hospice and palliative care. The people in palliative and hospice are seniors as well. We are looking after those people there.

A 50% reduction in hospital parking prices—130,000 seniors are benefiting from that. And what do I have to say—173,000 seniors are saving \$100 on their—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

#### RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question today is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, we know that investment in infrastructure across our province is key to economic growth. Besides playing a big part in our quality of life, investing in infrastructure is one of the most important things that we can do to stimulate the economy in the short term and improve our productivity and competitiveness in the long term. Whether it's the expansion of a regional road or waste water systems running under our streets, we all depend on high-quality infrastructure to keep our communities functioning.

Despite their smaller populations, rural municipalities continue to have big infrastructure demands. People need their roads widened and their bridges secured. Rural and small-town Ontario cannot be left behind by investments in our big cities.

Minister, could you please inform the House on what this government is doing to improve rural infrastructure?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Northumberland—Quinte West for his question this morning. As many in this House would know, prior to coming here in 2003, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West was probably one of the most popular mayors ever in the history of Brighton, Ontario.

He knows full well that that's why, as part of our largest investment in infrastructure in Ontario's history, rural municipalities continue to access funding under the

Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. OCIF helps small, rural and northern communities build and repair roads, bridges, water, and waste water treatment systems—projects that deliver on local community needs across the province.

I want to remind everybody in this House: In the late 1990s, we had the Who Does What committee. It was the “who got done in” committee. That was municipalities in eastern Ontario, where 43% of all the roads and bridges were downloaded.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Minister. I’m glad to hear—and I know my constituents in the riding of Northumberland–Quinte West, along with Cobourg mayor Brocanier, Mayor Walas from Brighton and Mayor Harrison from Quinte West, spoke very highly about this infrastructure funding, Minister.

You have made it clear that our government believes in working collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure we do what’s best for the province and its people. Rural communities have competing interests when it comes to deciding what local infrastructure projects to fund. They have a diverse range of needs, including roads, bridges and water supply networks. This funding will deliver on some long-standing municipal needs.

But, Mr. Speaker, municipalities need permanent, predictable formula allocations to help local governments plan accordingly. In order to protect their quality of life and foster new economic development, could the minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member for Northumberland–Quinte West for his supplementary.

On the Monday of the ROMA/OGRA conference, Premier Wynne delivered exceptionally good news to rural municipalities. We announced that OCIF will triple from \$100 million to \$300 million per year for 2018-19, with \$200 million in predictable, formula-based funding to meet asset management plans for those municipalities; and \$100 million available in application-based funding, allowing smaller municipalities to apply to invest in critical infrastructure needs.

Mr. Speaker, don’t take my word on how good this program is. I want to quote the mayor from Smiths Falls, Ontario, Shawn Pankow, who claimed: “For the first time that I’ve been to OGRA it was encouraging to come back with some positive news.”

## ASSISTIVE DEVICES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

In June 2015, you cut \$20 million from the Assistive Devices Program. We warned you then that this cut would result in long waits for service and damaging results for more than 300,000 Ontarians who depend on it. But, Minister, you disagreed and dismissed our con-

cerns over the cuts as “providing them in a more efficient way.”

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: I want to know, what are the wait times for Assistive Devices after the government-imposed cuts from 10 months ago?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I’m very proud of our ADP, our Assistive Devices Program. It assists many, many Ontarians. In fact, there are 8,000 different supports and devices that are included in our ADP. Last year, we actually helped 350,000 Ontarians with support to obtain those devices and often to maintain them as well. In fact, that’s increased dramatically. It’s pretty well doubled since we came into office in 2003. In fact we’ve more than doubled our funding since we came into office and formed government in 2003. It includes a whole variety of items, from home oxygen to insulin pumps and ostomy supplies.

It is a program which is challenging because the need is great, Mr. Speaker, and we try to make sure that we provide the level of support that each individual requires.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Back to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Jeff Preston suffers from muscular dystrophy and has spent his whole life in a wheelchair. Jeff is one of those 300,000 Ontarians whose life depends on timely access to adaptive equipment through Assistive Devices. He has been waiting to be assessed for a suitable wheelchair for almost a year, wondering each day—and these are his words, Minister—“if this will be the day of his worst nightmare where he is made a prisoner in his own home.”

There are too many vulnerable Ontarians like Jeff Preston facing an intolerably long wait and left suffering. My question is, what action is the minister going to take today to remedy this inexcusable backlog so that Jeff and all other Ontarians needing repairs for their assistive devices, wheelchairs and prosthetics can live with dignity and independence?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I want to commend Dr. Preston as well—

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Mr. Preston. Jeff Preston.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —sorry, Mr. Preston—

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** My colleagues have just re-emphasized that he’s a tremendous advocate for individuals who do require—and in fact my ministry has reached out to Mr.—

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Dr. Preston.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —to Dr. Preston. We have reached out to him, and we are listening to his advice and he’s providing a lot of very good advice. I’m not sure what more the member opposite would like me to do. We are working with him. He is providing good advice. He is a great advocate for this, and it works within the context of a program that is providing more than 8,000—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, you asked a question—listen.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —devices and supports to more than 350,000 Ontarians. It’s an important program.



We're proud of the fact that we have doubled the number of people who benefit and we've more than doubled the funding for the program.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Minister of Education. The minister claims that the potential closure of schools offering specialized supports has nothing to do with money. She even went so far as to say that it's "for the sake of the children."

Speaker, why don't we let the children have a say in what's best for them? A student at Trillium school said, "Please don't let the Liberals close my school. The school gives people like myself hope, hope that we can get a job, hope that we can get an education so we could live a happy life."

The closure of Robarts School for the Deaf or Amethyst school, both in London, would leave students in southwestern Ontario with nowhere else to turn.

Will the Minister of Education listen to parents, education workers and, most of all, students, and commit to keeping all specialized provincial and demonstration schools open?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I do want to reinforce that we are in fact committed to the success of all our students. That includes those who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and those who have severe learning disabilities. We are reviewing the programs for those students. Part of that is that we are going around and we actually are speaking with parents and students, because we do want their input.

1120

It's also true that we updated the definition of learning disabilities a few years ago. We've updated the provincial policy program memorandum on learning disabilities. But we never actually reviewed how we delivered the programs in our own provincial schools for children with severe learning disabilities. So, of course, we're having a look at the programs to make sure that we are providing the best service possible for all students with severe learning disabilities.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's unfortunate that the Deputy Premier was laughing through my question, considering both schools named are in her city.

Ontarians are tired of hearing this government find any excuse to force schools to close. Now, they're even suspending enrolment at specialized schools to build their case.

My office has been inundated with emails from parents wondering why specialized demonstration schools are being told not to let any more children in, if the government is only consulting. Usually, you consult first before you make decisions that impact some of our most vulnerable kids.

Students are emailing me, devastated that schools designed to help them succeed could be shut down. Families deserve more access to quality education, not less.

So I ask again, will the Minister of Education ensure that no provincial or demonstration schools will be closed as a result of the consultations?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Of course, the process that we are going through right now is a consultation. We are talking to parents and students, and no decisions have been made at this point.

But what I can certainly say is that I agree with one thing that you said, which is that we need to ensure the best special education services for all students. That's exactly what we're looking at: How do we provide the best special education services for all children? That is my commitment.

### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

Last year, our government announced major investments in transit as part of budget 2015. By moving forward with our plan to unlock the value of certain public assets, we've been able to support those investments in transit infrastructure projects through our Moving Ontario Forward plan.

The residents of my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore were extremely pleased to see our government announce a \$13.5-billion—I say "billion"—investment in improvements across the GO Transit network last year as part of this plan. This year's budget continues to build on these crucial investments.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House more about how budget 2016 will continue to build Ontario up?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for that fantastic question and for the wonderful job that he does not just representing his community, but as parliamentary assistant involved in economic development, employment and infrastructure.

As that member mentioned, last year our government announced unprecedented investments as part of budget 2015. This year, our budget builds on this important plan. As a first step to achieving regional express rail, we are already working to deliver a series of network-wide GO rail service improvements, including six new trips during the a.m. and p.m. for commutes on the Milton, Richmond Hill and Stouffville corridors; 10 new trips during off-peak hours on the Kitchener corridor, to and from Brampton; and 52 new trips on each weekend day on the Kitchener corridor, to and from Brampton, and the Barrie corridor, to and from Aurora.

This year, we are also announcing new and improved GO bus connections to the GO rail network for important communities like Cambridge and Brantford, along with a lot more.

I look forward to the supplementary answer, as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I want to thank the minister for his response. It's clear that our government continues

to put a great onus on investment in transit across the province.

But transit isn't the only type of infrastructure that is important in creating a connected transportation network in Ontario. Residents of Etobicoke–Lakeshore work and travel throughout the province, and they want to know that our government is committed to investing in our roads, bridges and highways throughout Ontario.

Can the minister please tell members of this House how this year's budget will help us build and maintain critical transportation infrastructure across the province?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** A very important second part to the story of budget 2016, as it relates to highways, roads and bridges: for example, the improvement on the Highway 417 Ottawa–Queensway corridor; the widening of nine kilometres of County Road 17 in the united counties of Prescott and Russell; and funding support for an additional ferry in the Kingston area.

This morning, I spent some time with the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, we announced the expansion and extension of Highway 427. This morning, that important project saw us standing in front of literally hundreds of skilled tradespeople, whose jobs and livelihoods will depend on this kind of investment from this government. The one question those skilled tradespeople asked that minister and myself is: Will Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath stand up and support them and help us build Ontario up?

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** He used our names, Speaker. You're supposed to use the ridings.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There's a reason I'm standing. The minister does know better. I want people to address people in this House with their titles or their ridings. It stays that way. I cannot let it slip.

New question.

#### ACCESSIBLE PARKING PERMITS

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

The Toronto Police Service "Abuse It and Lose It" campaign has come to an end with shocking results. They inspected over 1,500 accessible parking permits to make sure they were being used properly. They issued 862 parking tickets and confiscated the permits of 293 individuals who were then charged. That was all in just two weeks.

The Liberals have said that they were taking steps to combat this problem, yet the steps seem too slow. Will the minister work with the Minister of Community Safety to organize another blitz, perhaps this time outside of Toronto?

**Hon. David Orazietti:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite. As you know, my staff is working with her and her office to speak about what she may be bringing forward in the Legislature in the form of a private member's bill with regard to a committee.

As I said earlier on this question, it is despicable that anyone in Ontario would use a permit that is not for them in the presence of an individual who has a disability, whether that is a visible disability or not.

One of the things I think we are finding, as the member knows full well, is that municipalities have decided that they would allow different areas where individuals can use these permits and they're not consistent across the province, and that's a municipal decision. But what we are also finding, as well, is that the enforcement is working, in that those parking permits that we are now putting forward, which are new and have greater security, will help us reduce the fraud in the system.

I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Again to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: The "Abuse It and Lose It" campaign indicated a great need for enforcement and even more attention to accessible parking permit abuse. One in five permits inspected was being abused. The Toronto police did an amazing job here in Toronto.

What is the minister planning to do in order to crack down on accessible parking permit abuse across the province?

**Hon. David Orazietti:** Just to add further to what I was saying a moment ago, with respect to the new permits, the standards have been increased. Bar codes are being added; specific identification is now being required to be provided to have those permits released.

I'm happy to review how individuals receive those permits. There are a variety of health care professionals in Ontario who have the authority to issue those. That's not a determination of our ministry. If it's believed that an individual needs those permits, there are health professionals who make that decision.

We want to make sure, though, that what is being granted, as the member opposite is highlighting, is a secure permit. We also have to be mindful that there is an enforcement element to this; that we need to ensure that individuals are not using these permits who should not be using the permits.

I'm committed to working with the member opposite to improve this system for all Ontarians.

#### L'UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités. Encore une fois, les galeries à Queen's Park sont remplies de jeunes francophones de partout en Ontario—bienvenue. Ces jeunes sont là, en partie, parce qu'ils ont eu accès à l'éducation en langue française dans des écoles dirigées, gouvernées et gérées pour et par des francophones.

Depuis le mois passé, le ministre a sur son bureau le rapport du comité consultatif chargé d'évaluer les capacités actuelles des établissements postsecondaires du Centre et du Sud-Ouest. Il a également le document synthèse découlant des États généraux sur le



postsecondaire. Ces deux rapports recommandent la mise en place de l'Université de l'Ontario français. Quand est-ce que le ministre va faire le premier pas et mettre en place le comité transitoire de gouvernance pour une Université de l'Ontario français?

1130

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci.

Le ministre?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank the member for that question.

Access to French-language post-secondary education is of prime importance for our government. Currently, we have two universities in the province of Ontario that are bilingual. They offer courses in two languages, English and French: Laurentian University and the University of Ottawa. We have Glendon College at York University. We have two fully francophone colleges, Collège Boréal as well as La Cité in Ottawa.

We are not going to take a lesson from the NDP, when they created the Great Lakes College and then they shut it down. We are doing this very carefully.

Currently, we have 22,000 students that are studying in the French language in our universities and colleges. We are so proud of the good work that our colleges and universities are doing in terms of the provision of post-secondary education in the French language. We will continue our conversation with the stakeholders to make sure that French-language post-secondary education is available for our population and young people.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Monsieur le ministre, plusieurs des jeunes qui sont ici avec nous aujourd'hui à Queen's Park veulent aller à l'université. Plusieurs d'entre eux font partie des 2 000 inscriptions qu'on a déjà reçues pour l'Université de l'Ontario français. Le ministre sait très bien que ces jeunes-là manquent d'accès à des options postsecondaires en français en Ontario.

Pouvez-vous leur dire, à ces jeunes-là qui sont ici aujourd'hui avec nous, quand vous allez faire le premier pas vers l'Université de l'Ontario français? Est-ce que ce premier pas-là va être fait à temps pour qu'ils puissent aller à l'Université de l'Ontario français?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** Minister responsible for francophone affairs.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça me fait plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue à nos étudiants qui sont ici aujourd'hui.

On ne peut pas trouver un gouvernement qui a appuyé autant la francophonie ici en Ontario. Le premier pas pour l'université francophone a été fait depuis longtemps. On n'attendra pas leurs conseils et leurs projets de loi vides de sens, mais on a un ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités qui est très engagé. Il y a un processus qui est déjà en place.

Est-ce que ceux qui sont en 11<sup>e</sup> année ou 12<sup>e</sup> année vont aller à l'université francophone? Je ne crois pas, parce qu'on ne mettra pas une université francophone demain, parce qu'on devra l'établir sur des bases très solides pour s'assurer de la pérennité de l'université francophone. On ne fera pas comme le Collège des

Grands Lacs qui a été mis sur pied sur le dos d'un « napkin » par les néo-démocrates et qui a été fermé par les conservateurs quelques années après.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Han Dong:** My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that understands the importance of the north and the importance of the mining sector for our province. I know Ontario is the top jurisdiction in Canada for mineral exploration.

As many of us know, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada will be holding its highly anticipated 2016 annual convention here in my riding of Trinity-Spadina this week.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Northern Development and Mines please update the House with respect to this annual convention and explain how it is showcasing Ontario's mining sector?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thanks to the member for Trinity-Spadina for giving me an opportunity to tell the members of the Legislature about the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada—better known as PDAC—conference starting this coming Sunday.

It's a remarkable gathering, with over 20,000 attendees from over 100 countries. It's an opportunity for us to showcase the many successes of the province's mining sector.

We will be kicking off PDAC with the annual Ontario reception this Sunday evening. We want to welcome every member of the Legislature to be there. We'll certainly be welcoming delegates, including municipal and industry leaders, First Nations, Métis and a whole bunch of others to a great event and we encourage everyone to attend.

The one thing we really want to make clear is that the province remains very much one of the most attractive destinations for mineral exploration investment in North America. In 2003, explorations were \$193 million; last year, they exceeded \$390 million—all good news. Great work—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Han Dong:** I thank the minister for his answer and the update, and thank him very much for the invitation to this weekend's reception.

Our province's mining sector is impressive. I'm certainly pleased that Ontario is hosting this important international conference. I know that the international delegates who are here will enjoy all that the city of Toronto has to offer.

As we all know, the mining industry is very important not only for northern Ontario, but for the entire province. I know our province and our government continue to engage both corporate and First Nation partners to make sure we're creating the dynamic and innovative business climate that we need for this sector.

Speaker, through you to the Minister: How is our government showcasing our support for such an important industry?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thanks very much again to the member for Trinity–Spadina. You said it so well. Our government is absolutely dedicated to maintaining, if not growing and improving a business climate that attracts investment into our province. There are some great opportunities.

I do think it's important to say that in our budget last week our government reconfirmed our commitment to the mining sector with the \$1 billion for infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire, which was huge. I was most grateful to see that. We also made a strong commitment to the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, a program we made permanent last year, with a \$120-million investment every year, which is reducing energy costs for our major resource-based industries all across the north.

The fact is that Ontario remains the Canadian leader and one of the top jurisdictions in the world in exploration expenditures. We are going to keep doing the best job we can do to promote the mining sector, to build it up, create jobs and to build our economy up.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question this morning is for the Acting Premier.

Since 1870, a provincial school for deaf and hearing-impaired students has had a home in the city of Belleville. On Tuesday, the Minister of Education said that enrolment at the school was healthy and that the ministry was looking at other schools to close. Yesterday, she told my local media that no decisions have been made on the future of these provincial and demonstration schools.

Why is the minister of mixed messages playing games with the education—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** First of all, the member knows that is not acceptable. He will correct himself and withdraw, then he'll ask his question.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Withdraw.

Why is the minister playing games with the education of deaf and hearing-impaired students? And will the government commit today to keeping the Sir James Whitney School open?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I am committed to keeping the Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf open. It has never been on the consultation list. The same is true for E.C. Drury School for the Deaf and the W. Ross Macdonald School for the blind. We have said from the very beginning that we are not consulting on those schools.

What we have said is that we are looking at CJL. In fact, the French Language Services Commissioner wrote a report on CJL a few years ago and asked us to review the whole governance issue at CJL, which is part of what we're looking at there.

As I explained earlier in question period, we are also looking at the whole issue of how we deliver services for the severely learning disabled.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I thank the minister for confirming the Sir James Whitney school will remain open, but the government knows that Sagonaska Demonstration School, which operates on the same campus and same site, is in question—its future is in question. That school provides education for children with special needs who require more attention than other schools or other boards can provide. Parents of children with special needs, like phonological dyslexia, are being told that registration for their children is frozen for next year. They're worried that you're going to force their kids into programs and schools that aren't equipped to serve their special needs.

So my question for the minister is a simple one: Is she prepared to guarantee that Sagonaska Demonstration School will not close, and that our most vulnerable and deaf and hearing-impaired children will be able to get an education from one of these few schools in Ontario that actually is capable of meeting their special needs?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I want to confirm what the member said about the programs that are offered at the demonstration schools. I haven't had an opportunity to visit Sagonaska yet but it is on my to-do list to get there. Certainly in the demonstration schools, it is very clear that they provide an excellent program.

That's actually not the question. The question is, how do we best meet the needs of all children who have severe learning disabilities? Part of what I hear from parents is that they have not necessarily been well-served previously. That's exactly why we need to do a consultation on the programming, to make sure that we are serving the needs of all children who have severe learning disabilities.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from London–Fanshawe on a point of order.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. I would like to introduce dietitians from my city of London: Carol Morgan and Kim Sandiland. Welcome to the Legislature.

### DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S  
FIRST RESPONDERS ACT  
(POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS  
DISORDER), 2016

LOI DE 2016 D'APPUI  
AUX PREMIERS INTERVENANTS  
DE L'ONTARIO (ÉTAT DE STRESS  
POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with



respect to posttraumatic stress disorder / *Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail et la Loi sur le ministère du Travail relativement à l'état de stress post-traumatique.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Members, please take your seats.

On February 22, 2016, Mr. Flynn moved second reading of Bill 163. All those in favour of the bill, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Oraziotti, David
Ballard, Chris	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Patrick	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Coe, Lorne	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dickson, Joe	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Duguid, Brad	McDonnell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Fedeli, Victor	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakabuski, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 2, 2016, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's my pleasure to welcome students, parent volunteers and teachers from Withrow

public school in Toronto–Danforth who are here today. Colleagues, please be on your best behaviour.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Where were you this morning?

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### BERT REITSMA

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I would like to give a statement in remembrance of Egbert Reitsma. Egbert Reitsma died on February 11. Bert lived in Fitzroy Harbour with his wife, Patricia, where they raised their children, Tricia and Greg. They also have seven grandchildren who they are very proud of.

Bert worked for Ontario Hydro for over 20 years and was a leader in his community, starting in his teenage years. He was a Boy Scout leader, president of the community association and a sports coach, organizer and referee. He was captain of the Fitzroy Township Volunteer Fire Department.

Bert enjoyed politics. He was a councillor in the township of West Carleton for 20 years and was an active member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

In recognition of his many years of hard work and volunteerism, he received numerous awards, including the Queen's Jubilee Medal and Her Majesty's commemorative medal for Canada's 125th anniversary of Confederation, and he was West Carleton's Citizen of the Year in 1986.

Bert's family immigrated to Canada from Holland in 1950 when he was a young boy. Patricia told me that Bert believed that he had an obligation to give back to his country because Canada had given his family the opportunity to prosper. Bert Reitsma was a great Canadian.

##### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Well, I've got to ask the question: How much longer is the government of Ontario going to allow consumers across Ontario to be ripped off at the pumps? We have seen the price of oil by the barrel drop from over \$100 down to \$30, and less, a barrel, and we're still paying, in some cases, as much as a dollar a litre. There is no connection between the price at the pump and the price of the barrel. But it doesn't stop there. If you take a look at the price of gas per litre across this province, the differential in gas is anywhere from about 15 to 20 cents.

I looked this morning just to double-check a few communities, and this is what I saw: If you look at the city of Toronto, 80.9 cents per litre, but if you look at the city of Ottawa, 87 cents a litre. Are you going to tell me it costs seven cents a litre to move gas across and through Toronto to Ottawa? Well, how would you explain, then, that the price of gas in Timmins is 95.9 cents and the price of gas in Kenora is 83 cents? There's no correla-

tion. Clearly, the gas companies are gouging the public and taking advantage of the consumer.

We, as a Legislature, and the government of Ontario have the ability to regulate them so that the price of gas in this province can be regulated across the system so that no matter where you live—Kenora, Cornwall, Timmins or Toronto—the gas would be somewhat similar, and not a 15- or 20-cents-a-litre difference.

#### NEXXICE SYNCHRONIZED SKATING TEAMS

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'm delighted to rise in the House today to recognize Nexxice synchronized skating, an organization based out of the Burlington skating club in my riding. With six teams ranging from beginner to senior, skaters of all ages train with Nexxice to compete at competitions from the regional to international level.

Recently I had the privilege of having the intermediate team perform at my second annual Family Day Fun Skate. There's nothing quite like watching this talented team of 16 young women elegantly glide across the ice in perfect unison. Coached by Jennifer Beauchamp-Crichton, the team performed to a swing theme, captivating the audience and setting the tone for what was a great afternoon on the ice.

Just weeks later, this same team, along with the Nexxice senior team, competed at the 2016 Skate Canada Synchronized Skating Championships in Waterloo last month. This competition brought together 40 teams and over 800 skaters from across Canada. As the nine-time national champions and reigning world champions, the Nexxice senior team came in second place after a great free program performance to Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody. The intermediate team placed second in their division as well.

I'd like to congratulate both of them for their efforts at the Skate Canada championships. As the senior team moves on to defend their world title, I'd like to ask my colleagues to join me in wishing them all the best as they prepare for the International Skating Union World Synchronized Skating Championships in Budapest, Hungary, this April.

#### COMPLEX REGIONAL PAIN SYNDROME

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Today I rise to bring awareness to a rare disease that impacts constituents in my riding of York-Simcoe: complex regional pain syndrome. Today we are joined by some constituents from in and around my riding who suffer from this syndrome: Deborah Burton, Gidget Herbet and Janice Muccio. We are also joined by Deborah's husband, Ralph Hollander.

Complex regional pain syndrome is a chronic pain condition most often affecting one limb, usually after an injury or a trauma to that area. CRPS is believed to be caused by damage to or malfunction of the nervous system. The texture of the skin may change, sweat patterns

may be impacted, and hair and nail growth patterns may be altered. The joints may be stiff, muscle movement decreased, and the limb may have a tremor. Described as an invisible pain, it has been described as a burning sensation that can have a physiological and psychological impact on those suffering with the disease. Anyone can get CRPS—men and women of all ages; however, it is most common among middle-aged women.

All too often, those with rare diseases get left behind in our health care system. An estimated one in 12 Canadians are impacted by a rare disease, either as a parent, family member, caregiver or friend. Defined as a disease impacting fewer than one in 2,000 people, it is time for a strategy.

Today we will be voting on my colleague Michael Harris's private member's bill, which is dedicated to treating rare disease. I am looking forward to voting in support of his motion, and I hope that my colleagues in all caucuses will do the same.

#### HYDRO ONE

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** What do more than 80% of Ontarians, nearly 200 municipalities, all eight independent officers of the Legislature and business leaders across the province have in common? They all oppose this government's short-sighted sell-off of Hydro One. It's something I've heard across my community, from doorstep to town halls. Ontarians are sending the message loud and clear that they don't want the Premier to sell Hydro One, but she isn't listening.

Fortunately, people in Oshawa don't give up that easily. I hold in my hand here 70 letters that I've received from people in Oshawa and the Durham region, and they're calling on the Premier to stop the sale of Hydro One. They all share the same message: "I did not give you permission to sell Hydro One or any other public utility or publicly owned asset on my behalf."

Let's not forget, Speaker, what "public" means. The Premier has taken it to mean "government property for her to do with as she pleases," but I have 70 letters here that disagree, and there are thousands more across the province that are fighting tooth and nail as well. It's an important message, one that the Premier should hear.

Since these letters are addressed to the Premier, I will ask that a page please put these 70 letters on her desk because I want to make sure that she receives them. The people of Ontario have spoken. The people of Oshawa have spoken. Let's hope that the Premier decides to listen.

#### BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** This past Friday, I had the opportunity to join business leaders from west Northumberland at the Business Achievement Awards in Cobourg. These awards are presented in partnership with the town of Cobourg and the Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce. They recognize local businesses in Cobourg,



Hamilton township and Alnwick/Haldimand township who are leaders in their fields and exemplify business excellence.

1310

This year's award winners—and I want to congratulate them—are United Way Northumberland for the non-profit sector, Curves Cobourg for health and wellness, Boston Pizza for hospitality and tourism, Lorenz Conveying Products for manufacturing, Barrett's Christmas Tree Farm for retail, Lakeland Multi-trade for skilled trades, Keep on Rolling professional painting services for a new start-up, Watershed Magazine for communication and technology, and Mayhew Graphics for business and consumer services.

Joan Chalovich received the James Crossen Lifetime Achievement Award, Chris Pelletier received the Chamber Chair's Award and Chem-Ecol received the prestigious Mayor's Award.

Small and medium businesses are the backbone of economic growth in our province. They are the ones that provide jobs for Ontarians and help build strong, vibrant communities. I'm delighted we're investing \$2.7 million in the Jobs and Prosperity Fund and continuing the Eastern Ontario Development Fund. I'm very excited about these people, and I want to congratulate them all.

#### RÉSEAU DES FEMMES PARLEMENTAIRES

**M<sup>me</sup> Gila Martow:** Je veux parler un petit peu de la conférence internationale la semaine passée. C'était le Réseau des femmes parlementaires. C'était une sous-réunion, vraiment, pour l'Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie. J'ai passé quelques journées à Tanger, Maroc, avec deux de mes collègues : Sophie Kiwala, la libérale qui est ici maintenant, et France Gélinas. On a aussi voyagé avec John Anderson. C'est le directeur du protocole.

J'ai parlé un peu. J'ai fait une exposition sur l'analphabétisme des femmes, et c'est surtout des immigrants au nord de l'Ontario qui peut-être ont besoin d'un peu d'assistance ici à l'Assemblée.

On a discuté de beaucoup de choses pour donner une meilleure qualité de vie aux femmes. On a discuté de l'éducation, de l'élimination de la pauvreté, de l'égalité et du mariage des jeunes filles.

J'ai aussi visité quelques membres de la communauté juive au Maroc : Sonia Cohen Toledano et Aron Abikzer. Ce sont des amis de Simon Keslassy, de mon comté. Il est le président de la Communauté Juive Marocaine de Toronto. On a visité quelques synagogues et aussi un cimetière.

#### TAMARA JAWORSKA

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I rise today to speak about the iconic Polish Canadian artist Tamara Jaworska, who died in her 97th year on October 29, 2015.

Ms. Jaworska was a contemporary tapestry weaver who was recognized by her peers as being a virtuoso in technique and style of modern tapestry. In the late 1940s, Ms. Jaworska studied painting at the Polish State Academy of Fine Art in Lodz. She was awarded a master's degree and then went on to teach at that school for many years.

In 1969, Ms. Jaworska and her husband, Tad Jaworski, a noted filmmaker, immigrated to Toronto to escape censorship and repression by the communist regime in Poland. As a new Canadian, she found inspiration in Canadian nature and landscape, and created abstract and realistic compositions. One of her most notable works, called the "Unity of Canada" tapestry, was hung in the Place Bell Canada lobby in Ottawa. Her artistic legacy has been displayed in museums, Canadian embassies, galleries and private collections in Canada and across the world.

Ms. Jaworska was elected a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, a prestigious opponent to the centre national de tapisserie d'Aubusson in Paris, and she is a member of the Order of Canada. She was described as one of Canada's proudest cultural treasures. We mourn her loss but celebrate her artistic legacy.

#### REFUGEE HUB

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Last month, I had the pleasure to join Mary-Margaret McMahon, a local councillor, at the Danforth East Community Association and the organizers of East Toronto Families for Syria for the grand opening of a refugee hub in Beaches–East York.

The hub is a very special place, located just two doors down from my constituency office on Danforth Avenue. There, Syrian refugees come to the hub to find free household items, clothing, school supplies and other necessities that make settling here in Canada that much easier. The hub is staffed and supplied entirely by local volunteers, many of whom are local members and families, and every item in the store is either donated or purchased with donated funds. Over the past few weeks, they've provided household essentials, including small appliances and food, to over 230 local refugee families.

The organization and the efficiency of East Toronto Families for Syria would make an excellent model for other communities to emulate. Not only do they coordinate donations; they've connected newcomers with services that will help them find jobs and education resources in our community.

The generosity of my constituents, and indeed of all people across the province, has been remarkable, and the compassion they have shown to so many strangers should be commended. The centre is only open on a part-time basis, so my office has become a place where people can bring donations. When they do open up, they come by and pick it up so they can distribute it.

What I would encourage is that all members of this House go to Facebook and check out East Toronto Families for Syria so they can get a better sense of this wonderful work that they're doing in my community.

## MOTIONS

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding government order number 42.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Deputy House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that when government order number 42 is next called, the Speaker shall put the question immediately without further debate or amendment; and

That in the case of a recorded division, the division bells be limited to five minutes and the vote may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h).

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Bradley moves that when government order number 42 is next called, the Speaker shall put—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL LITERACY WEEK

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I rise in the House today in recognition of Canadian Agricultural Literacy Week, which takes place this year from February 28 to March 5.

Now in its fifth year, Canadian Agricultural Literacy Week encourages students in classrooms across the country to celebrate and learn about this very important industry. It is important that people in our cities and towns know about the vital role that Ontario's agri-food sector plays in their everyday lives. Supporting our agri-food sector is a key priority for our government. We're working with our industry partners to ensure that our farmers and food processors continue to be successful and that Ontarians know the important role they play in making the province's economy strong and, indeed, competitive.

I want to take a moment to recognize some of our dedicated partners who are building awareness on the importance of our agriculture and food system. With support from our government, organizations like Ontario Agri-Food Education have made it their mission to teach students about farming and where their food comes from. Last year alone, Ontario Agri-Food Education teacher ambassadors delivered 185 interactive classroom lessons focusing on a variety of agricultural and food themes across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the honourable member for Huron-Bruce, in terms of promotion of agriculture education and literacy related to her private member's bill that she introduced in this Legislature some time ago.

They also offer student tours, education exhibits and workshops to help students gain knowledge and understanding of agri-food topics. These teacher ambassadors also support events and organizations through classroom lessons, student tours, education exhibits and workshops.

I also want to thank Farm and Food Care Ontario, an organization that runs a number of innovative programs and workshops to help raise local food awareness by connecting farmers to non-farming audiences.

**1320**

I also want to thank the Dietitians of Canada and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association for helping to raise awareness of local food among students through the Fresh from the Farm initiative. Since 2013, nearly 300 schools have participated in this very innovative program, helping schools raise funds by selling local apples, carrots, onions and potatoes within their communities, just like my community of Peterborough, while teaching children about where the produce comes from. Last year was bigger than ever, with students selling more than 465,000 pounds of Ontario produce, nearly triple the volume from a year earlier. I can't wait to see how the program continues to grow in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, a big part of agricultural literacy week and a priority of our government is promoting the healthy, high-quality food that Ontarians have access to right here in Ontario. Our government recognizes this need, and it introduced and passed the Local Food Act in order to support and celebrate the hard work of Ontario farmers and to make it easier for Ontarians to choose local food wherever they are. We need to educate and encourage young Ontarians to embrace fresh, seasonal produce so they can experience the delicious corn, asparagus, broccoli and tomatoes that we grow right here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we all should be aware of the high demand now for French's ketchup in the province of Ontario. In fact, they can't supply the market. This is the story: I was in Leamington a short time ago to see the rise-again of the old Heinz operation in Leamington—now Highbury Canco—doing tomato ketchup for French's, and they cannot supply the market here in Ontario. That's a good-news story that we all embrace in this Legislature.

Part of this comes from promoting farmers' markets and continuing to support the venues that allow Ontarians to experience and taste food that is grown in their community. I want to thank now-Senator Bob Runciman. Ten years ago, he brought forward a private member's bill for fruit wines at farmers' markets. We have now been able to deliver on his idea from a decade ago.

It might be hard to believe after the February we've just had, but we should also be sharing the successes of our remarkable greenhouse sector, which is able to



produce lettuce, cucumbers, peppers and other vegetables through the winter months. In fact, you can grow a cucumber from a flower to a mature cucumber in exactly 10 days.

Mr. Speaker, local food isn't just about fresh ingredients; it's also about offering busy families high-quality prepared food using ingredients from Ontario farms, such as Campbell's soups or French's ketchup.

By helping our children understand and appreciate the value and importance of Ontario's farmers, local food and food processors, we're helping to build a better Ontario. We'll continue to work collaboratively with our partners to ensure that the next generation knows about the important role that agriculture plays in our lives and the range of high-quality, locally produced foods that we grow right here in Ontario, year-round.

I want to encourage all colleagues on all sides of the House to take a moment, not only this week but throughout the year, to visit a farm or farmers' market and have a conversation with family members or co-workers about the food we eat and where it comes from.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It's time for responses.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's a pleasure to say a few words about Canadian Agricultural Literacy Week, running February 28 to March 5, as we just heard.

It's a concept that's so important. So many of our residents in Ontario are two, three or more generations removed from the farm. Many of us may or may not—tofu, for example, comes from soybeans. It's a two-way street, and I can attest that many soybean farmers down my way don't eat tofu; they don't eat the product that they produce. So it's truly a two-way street. There has to be this communication back and forth.

In various whipped toppings, much of the main ingredient can be vegetable oil. I just assumed dairy, myself. It's white and kind of fluffy and what have you. Vegetable oil is also used in soap, skin products and perfume. I grew up on a corn farm, and it's just astounding, the products that come from field corn: the starch used in aspirin, for example. So it's much broader than just food, much deeper than that, the products that are used for fibre and pharmaceuticals, and the value-added side that is also so important right across Ontario and right across Canada.

Agri-Food Canada indicated that the sector generates \$106 billion a year, 6.7% of Canada's gross domestic product, and employs 2.2 million people right across our country. That's one in eight jobs. It's very important for the economy alone, and certainly our Ontario economy.

I think that if we knew more about agriculture, there would probably be a bit more of an outcry about the recent cut to the budget. We lost \$28 million. The Local Food Fund, I understand, has wrapped up, although we were recently told by the minister that it has gone over to the greenbelt people. I don't know where that leaves us in Windsor or the Slate River Valley, or up in Thunder Bay, Timiskaming, and northeastern Ontario. So much of our agri-business stretches from the Michigan border right

across to the Quebec border. It's certainly not limited to the greenbelt.

I had lunch today and noticed in the cafeteria that the bright sign that is lit up, down at the sandwich bar, was advertising, asking all of us to take a 100-meal journey. I think this is in March. During the month of March, on average, we'll eat about 100 meals. It's asking us to think about vegetables, drink more water—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Toby Barrett:**—some of us should have smaller portions, if that's what I heard said over there—and fruit instead of candy, things like that.

I had breakfast this morning. I joined the dietitians downstairs and met a couple of what I refer to as "Mac girls." I graduated from OAC, the Ontario Agricultural College, and there were reasons for us guys to go over to Macdonald Hall. Anyway, the dietitians: Man, they filled me in years ago on what is in food and what should be in food.

This is a very important phone number. It's almost like Telehealth. I met a young lady there. She mans the phone. It's EatRight Ontario. You can pick up the phone any time, or maybe during business hours—I'm not sure—and ask any questions about what it is you're eating or what's in that box. Here's the number: 1-877-510-510-2. Just dial the number and see if it works. Anyway, it's just a phone call away.

I guess my last comment: We talk about the importance of ag literacy in the schools, elementary and high school. I took a full-blown agriculture course in high school—grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. I studied agriculture and ag economics at Guelph. I had the honour and the pleasure to teach agriculture at the high school level—grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, in the four-year and five-year streams. We've lost that in so many of our schools.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further responses?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to rise in the House. Today, on behalf of my colleagues and my leader, Andrea Horwath, I pay tribute to Canadian Agricultural Literacy Week. This is the fifth annual week, and we should thank the people who try to teach our kids what agriculture is truly about, people like the Ontario agricultural—OAFE. I know them as OAFE.

Coming from a farm, I just had this illusion that most kids knew about agriculture. I came from a farm community, and we all talked about agriculture. My first real taste of why we needed it was at the 2009 plowing match, when we helped with the education tent. We had 9,000 kids come through that tent. That's when it struck me how important a role these people play in teaching.

**1330**

That's actually when I met the member from Huron—Bruce, who worked with me in that endeavour, and we both continue to work on teaching kids about agriculture. I think for all the people who are involved in this, it's a very worthy endeavour.

Today, I would like to stray a little bit. There's another problem that agriculture faces, and it's not literacy so much; it's comprehension. You can read something, but

you might not be able to understand it; or you might be able to say something from notes, but you might not be able to understand what you're saying. My example is that when the Premier became Minister of Agriculture and she challenged agriculture to create 120,000 jobs, I was happy about that because I thought, "Okay, she doesn't know a lot about agriculture, but she recognizes the potential." There were a lot of people saying, "Oh, she shouldn't be minister." I thought, no; she could learn a lot.

The fact that she recognizes there's so much potential is a good thing. But in my mind, as a farmer, I thought, "Okay, so if you want to grow, you need the tools to grow." If I'm going to work more land, I need a bigger cultivator. If I'm going to grow the industry, I need tools. That is where this government is failing. They don't comprehend agriculture, because for us to reach goals like they are setting—and farmers set goals of growth every day for themselves and so do food processors; so do food retailers—they need the tools.

One of these tools would have been an increase in the Risk Management Program, which is capped; that would have been a tool. Obviously, this government doesn't fully comprehend agriculture, because they didn't move on that.

I'll give you another example: The government introduced regulations on neonicotinoid insecticides. We're not opposed to that. We should have a robust regulation system for pesticides, but it's got to be a robust system that works. Once again, the government didn't seem to comprehend that, because as we speak, farmers and crop consultants are telling me that the forms you have to fill out for your planting intentions have changed not once, not twice, not three times—

**Interjection:** Four times.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Four times. I was going to say four and a half, but that's not right.

That's a sign of a government not understanding, not comprehending, what they're doing regarding agriculture, because these regulations do impact the competitiveness of that sector. When you put forward a regulation—and they have the right to do that—that impacts the competitiveness of a sector, you would think that they would also put forward programs that would mitigate that. Again, no, they don't.

They challenged us to create jobs, but they put roadblocks in front of the sector to actually stop jobs. Again, it takes a lot to comprehend agriculture.

In my final few minutes: You want to boost agriculture? Here's a novel concept: How about broadband Internet in rural Ontario? You want to keep young people in rural Ontario? A novel concept: You know it would be nice if you could actually use your iPad, because farmers need stuff like that. There are a lot of people in rural Ontario who are happy to have dial-up. We talk about giving agriculture the tools for 120,000 jobs. Give the sector the tools, and they will create the jobs. But don't just talk about it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their comments.

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I'm affixing my signature to this very, very heavy petition.

### RURAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition called "To Preserve Community Schools.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is right for Ontario youth to be educated in their home communities;

"Whereas accessible schools that students can walk, bike or take a short ride to promote healthy lifestyles, a cleaner environment and emotional well-being;

"Whereas the economies of smaller rural towns are directly strengthened and vitalized by high schools in their own communities;

"Whereas community schools best serve special populations;

"Whereas rural high schools more than 15 km from the next high school should be considered eligible for enhanced top-up funding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct support and resources to Ontario rural community schools, such as Harrow District High School, so as to provide and sustain accessible education for youth within their home communities, preserving and sustaining rural town culture that diversifies the fabric of the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to Delaney from the town of Leamington, not far from Harrow, to take to the desk.



## HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the home inspector industry remains largely unregulated; and

“Whereas homeowners are increasingly reliant on home inspectors to make an educated home purchase; and

“Whereas the unregulated industry poses a risk to consumers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To protect consumers by regulating the home inspection industry and licensing home inspectors.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to Bianca to take to the table.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it now, and provide it to Luke.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** “Whereas quality care for the 77,000 residents of long-term-care ... homes is a priority for many Ontario families;

“Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario’s hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government; and, there has been a 29.7% increase in the acuity level of LTC residents and 73% of LTC residents in Ontario suffer from some form of Alzheimer’s or dementia;

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes keeps pace with residents’ increasing acuity and a growing number of residents with complex behaviours such as dementia and Alzheimer’s;

“Whereas there is extensive evidence that a care standard can result in increased staff levels, which translates into improved quality of care for residents;

“Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner’s inquests into nursing deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and increase in staffing levels;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province’s long-term-care homes in 2003 but in 2013” and on, “they have yet to make good on their promise;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard—but falls short of actually creating one; 1340

“Whereas the most detailed and reputable study of minimum care standards recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day; and

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day adjusted for acuity level and case mix;

“(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard and tie public funding for homes to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meet the legislated minimum care standard of four hours;

“(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory;

“(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment who have been assessed as potentially aggressive, and staff them with sufficient numbers of appropriately trained workers;

“(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds and alternative-level-of-care beds to end the downloading of hospital patients with complex medical conditions to long-term-care homes.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and present it to page Charlotte to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

## LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** A hard act to follow there.

I’ve a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes), lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in

direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues; and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario lung health action plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name and send it to the table with page Dhruv.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

“Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults battling this catastrophic disease;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this petition wholeheartedly. I’ll sign it and send it to the table with Jordan.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition entitled “Hydro One Not for Sale!” It reads as follows:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions” of dollars “less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don’t have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario’s Hydro One.”

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Bianca to take to the table.

#### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on ... private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues; and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario lung health action plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through” third reading, and to ask and “seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with it, affix my signature, and send it with Laura down to the table.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to



come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I have affixed my signature as well, Mr. Speaker.

## ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE EN FRANÇAIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Une pétition pour l'Université de l'Ontario français :

« Entendu que le 10 février le RÉFO, l'AFO et la FESFO ont présenté le rapport du Sommet provincial des États généraux sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français;

« Entendu que le rapport a indiqué un besoin et un désir pour une université de langue française;

« Entendu que le 26 mai, 2015 la députée France Gélinas a présenté un projet de loi pour créer cette université;

« Nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit : de commencer la création de l'Université de l'Ontario français dès que possible. »

J'appuie cette pétition, et je vais demander à la page Delaney de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

## LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another petition here. I've been getting these in from across Ontario. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a lung health advisory council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues; and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario lung health action plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through" its third reading "and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with the petition, affix my name and send it down to the table with Micah.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### RARE DISEASES

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, a select committee on diagnosis and treatment funding for patients with rare diseases should be appointed to consider and report to the House its observations and recommendations with respect to the urgent need for a comprehensive strategy to address the issues patients of all rare diseases are facing in the province of Ontario when accessing necessary care and treatment.

**1350**

The committee should review the report of the Ontario Citizens' Council regarding funding for drugs for rare diseases that was presented to the Ontario drug program in 2010 and review the effectiveness of the draft framework from when it was first introduced in 2011. The committee should also review the coordination of delivery of funding for diagnosis and treatment for rare diseases (DRDs) across provincial ministries and agencies; and that in developing its strategy and recommendations, the committee should focus on the following issues:

- the current definition that is used for rare diseases in Ontario;

- training of medical professionals to both effectively diagnose and provide appropriate referrals and treatment options for rare diseases;

- the need for a provincial research and drug development strategy for rare diseases;

- the alignment of available clinical data, best-practice guidelines and funding criteria;

- the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act and any changes that are necessary to better support Ontarians with rare diseases;

- the implementation of the Compassionate Review Policy for DRDs;

- the need for a committed funding envelope specific for DRDs;

- the Health Insurance Act regulations and out-of-country services program for possible improvements to allow more timely access to necessary treatment whether in or out of province;

- the Assistive Devices Program and related funding to ensure urgent needs for equipment required by those with rare disease are met;

- Ontario respite care programs and suitability to meet the needs of those impacted by rare disease; and

—any further government-funded supports for families and caregivers struggling to meet the care needs of those suffering with rare disease.

That the committee shall meet on Wednesdays following routine proceedings until 6 p.m.; and

That the committee is authorized to meet at the call of the Chair but must recess during the oral question period when meeting at Queen's Park; and

That the committee shall have the authority to travel within Ontario; and

That the committee should present an interim report to the House no later than September 30, 2016, and a final report no later than December 31, 2016; and

That in the event of, and notwithstanding, any prorogation of the House before the presentation of the committee's final report, the committee should be deemed to be continued to the subsequent session or sessions and may continue to meet during any such prorogation; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 113(a), the committee shall be composed of six members from the government, one of whom shall be the Chair, two members from the official opposition, one of whom shall be the Vice-Chair, and one member from the third party;

That the chief whip of each of the recognized parties should indicate in writing to the Clerk of the House their party's membership on the committee by March 10, 2016.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Harris has moved private member's notice of motion number 63. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you, Speaker. It's truly an honour to stand here today on behalf of the one in 12 people of Ontario who suffers with one of the close to 7,000 rare diseases—diseases with acronyms like CCHS, PAH, PKU, EDS and aHUS, and names like alpha-1, Duchenne muscular dystrophy and Angelman syndrome—the list goes on.

Today, I stand united with those rare disease sufferers who came to this morning's press conference, those packing the galleries today, those I met over the last months of cross-province round tables and those suffering in isolation throughout Ontario. Together, we stand united in a call for action in support of my private member's motion to strike an all-party select committee into rare disease diagnosis, treatment and support.

It's been well over a year since I began my own journey in learning about the unique, yet shared, challenges faced by those rare disease patients across Ontario. Having no personal or family connection to rare disease concerns, it was the stories of patients who are forced to come here to Queen's Park to plead with legislators for the treatment and support we all would expect and deserve in Ontario—stories that were shared by people like Madi Vanstone and the stories that soon came directly into my office when a Kitchener friend, Anne Bilodeau, contacted me to detail the unfunded treatment and life-threatening crisis faced by her friend, aHUS patient Johann Kerlow.

Once I began writing letters and digging into the issues surrounding rare diseases in the province, I soon learned that these stories were only the beginning. The more I learned, the more I realized that we couldn't just sit idly by and allow the challenges faced by those suffering to go unaddressed. Bottom line: I was sick of seeing those who were suffering coming to Queen's Park and coming into my office when there was nothing I could do about it.

Well, there was something. There is something we can all do about it, in fact, as Ontarians and as provincial representatives. I know I'm not alone. I'm sure we've all heard from patients who have contacted our offices or made the trip to Queen's Park to urge the government to provide specific, often life-saving, treatments. The message from these patients and those I have since met from across the province, as I'm sure you have heard in your own ridings, is that we in government are a last resort. The majority of these patients are coming to us as legislators because they have run out of options and they are desperate for our assistance. They're coming to us after years of misdiagnosis; after being told, "It's all in your head"; after being prevented access to life-saving treatment; after being refused vital life-enhancing equipment; and after watching their families beg and borrow, remortgage or even sell their homes to afford treatment. They're coming to us after spending too many dark days and nights suffering in relative solitude without the support networks available to those with a more common disease.

While rare or orphan diseases may only affect a small percentage of the population, their impact is so much more. These are people of Ontario deserving of access to medical treatments we all deserve as residents of this province. Their small numbers shouldn't mean the government can go along ignoring their suffering.

Today, we have the opportunity to finally address what governments have failed to address for far too long. We have the opportunity to join together in a united response to support our #TreatRareDisease campaign and, more specifically, to support our call for an all-party select committee to hear from experts, medical professionals, sufferers and their families, and use that first-hand experience to develop meaningful, lasting recommendations for the treatment of rare disease here in the province of Ontario.

In the last year alone, I've sponsored a media studio for families suffering from a series of rare diseases whose challenges are unique and yet shared, families whose heart-wrenching stories cry out for the government's attention and action. And yet, despite words of understanding from government when they are on their doorsteps, they continue to wait for support. Again, it was hearing these stories from the patients who I feel are the experts in many of these cases that prompted me to launch my #TreatRareDisease campaign and today's motion.

In recent months, instead of forcing patients to come here to share their stories, I felt it was time to go to them.



Over a series of visits I made from Ajax to Windsor, from Sudbury to Ottawa and Brockville, from Hamilton and Kitchener, the stories I heard directly from patients only further supported the series of factors I'm asking the all-party select committee to consider.

In our first stop in Ajax, where we were hosted by the Carion Fenn Foundation, we heard from alpha-1 patient Tom Leckie, who suffered from a collapsed lung and liver. Tom is a survivor. He will be on anti-rejection drugs for the rest of his life.

In Ottawa, we heard of the difficulty surrounding misdiagnosis, where an EDS sufferer was prescribed antidepressants instead of getting an x-ray that may have led to a more proper diagnosis. She indicated that it was the journey to be diagnosed that was the most frustrating.

It was also in Ottawa where I heard one of the most troubling and yet brutally honest statements since I started this campaign, when the wife of an alpha-1 patient addressed the challenge of access to treatment for rare disease patients. She told us that had he been diagnosed with a cancer, he would have been inside the system and would have had the access to treatment and supports that remain out of reach. You can stop for a second and think of what struggle and hurdles one must have experienced to make that type of statement. It really puts the entire issue into a heart-wrenching perspective, to think that they would have rather had cancer than the rare disease that they happen to have.

1400

In Hamilton, we heard of the need for research into a cure for Angelman syndrome, a rare congenital disorder leading to mental disability, when Kathryn Nicholls told of the challenges faced by her young daughter, Alyssa. They remain waiting for a cure that medical experts believe is well within reach but, due to its rarity, lacks the necessary research support.

In Kitchener, access to medication was again a key concern to Sue Thomas, mother of Jason, a 23-year-old whose life took a sudden U-turn when he was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy at the age of 19. I know that Jason may be watching today, and I want to thank him for sharing his story. Jason, who relies on a wheelchair and will never be able to eat again due to the continuing throat issues and lung infections, is his own best advocate in the twitterverse @jasonsWHEELS, where you can learn more about his work to champion vital medications that are difficult to access here in the province.

Patients weren't only sharing their stories at our tour stops. They were also writing them and sharing them on our website, [treatrareisease.ca](http://treatrareisease.ca). I continue to encourage my colleagues to log on and read through the concerns and challenges faced by rare disease sufferers throughout the province. You'll read about Windsor's Jon Brentnall, who lost his mother after she suffered from an undiagnosed, serious bacterial skin infection that spreads quickly and kills the body's soft tissue: necrotizing fasciitis. He tells us, "No medical scans were done to diagnose properly." The doctor told her to take an

antibiotic and that she should notice a difference by morning and dismissed her. "Rest in peace, Mum," Jon wrote.

Leamington's Donna Coulter was one of a handful who told us of the excruciating situation faced by those with complex regional pain syndrome, also known as the "suicide disease." She is one of many advocating for desperately needed education and research and assistance to those suffering.

Speaker, the stories go on. There are so many who have suffered so long in relative silence that once they are given the opportunity to share their unique challenges they are grateful to understand that their elected representatives are finally listening. It is because of these compelling stories that I believe that working together through the select committee open public process will prove to be the best route to hear from patients, their families, and experts in the medical community to try to come up with a solution to help these families.

With that said, I think it's important, as we look to push forward the select committee approach, that we do register our appreciation for the Minister of Health's announcement earlier this week to acknowledge the need to address the challenges facing rare disease sufferers. And while the minister's announced working group provides one step in the search for answers, the select committee process I'm calling for will provide the transparent public forum and discussion that will lead to the concrete answers and province-wide strategy patients deserve.

Speaker, we are all well acquainted with the success of past all-party select committees in bringing long-hidden issues to the fore and leading to informed and essential recommendations dealing with difficult concerns that demand government attention. I think of the success of select committees on developmental services and on mental health and addictions, and the recent work of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment.

Select committees provide the transparent, open forum required to deal with these issues that have, for far too long, remained hidden. Without a select committee, these discussions go on behind closed doors. That's where it has been for years and that's not what is helping patients.

Too many times we've seen announcements of government intentions to address these issues and too many times we've seen them little more than a practice in spinning wheels. It has been five years since the government received the Ontario Citizens' Council report on rare disease, and five years later we've seen no action.

I've learned first-hand over the last year that, when it comes to rare disease, the real experts are the patients. Our government needs to hear from them. If we walk away today, we're caught in the same waiting game we've been trapped in for far too long now. Bottom line: The select committee approach will deliver the transparent public forum that rare disease sufferers deserve to complement the recent provincial acknowledgement of the need for attention. It's my sincere hope that we can assist the efforts of the minister through this all-party select committee.

Today, we have an opportunity to build on the minister's announcements by supporting the open, all-party select committee process. But to be very clear, should MPPs choose to stand against this afternoon's motion for an all-party select committee into rare disease treatment, they will be turning their backs on the transparent public process and recommendations that these patients are calling on you to support. So I'm standing with them today to ask that you don't turn your back on them. It is a truly bipartisan issue that crosses party lines. I look forward to the support to push forward this important initiative and finally give rare disease sufferers the support they so dearly deserve.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is a pleasure for me to add my voice to the member for Kitchener—Conestoga's and to congratulate him on the #TreatRareDisease campaign. He covered a lot of what I had the intention to cover.

Basically, those are people without a voice. They have a rare disease. There are not a whole lot of them out there. Most of them have a gut-wrenching story to tell before they finally got diagnoses. Once they get there, sometimes there is relief and sometimes there isn't. But all of them have suffered in silence for a long time.

Finally, the wind seems to be shifting a little bit. People are interested in reaching out to those rare disease sufferers and seeing that, if we put our time, effort, energy and brainpower together, maybe we could do something to help them and maybe we can do something to help all of us. This is what the member is trying to do.

I had the privilege to sit on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. I come from 25 years in health care. I'm glad to see that the Chair of that committee is here today. When I started work on that committee, I came with my health provider's set of eyes and ears to it. But I quickly realized that this is not what people wanted; they wanted to have an opportunity to come and talk to politicians and talk to their government as to how things could be made better. I think we made some pretty good all-party unanimous recommendations.

Just the fact that we had the select committee, the fact that we travelled the province, the fact that we gave close to 300 people and families the opportunity to be heard, to share their story, to tell us how we had failed them and to tell us how we could do things better: This, in itself, I am convinced, helped change the conversation about mental health and helped to bring it to where it is now, where it is a whole lot more open.

We have the opportunity to do the same thing with rare diseases. We have an opportunity to let every Ontarian know that they exist, know that those people struggle, and to put some good—hopefully—recommendations forward. A select committee is transparent, it is accountable, it is public, and it is open to everybody. It is not cumbersome; it is easy for people to participate.

I have nothing against the Minister of Health doing his work and getting his experts together and getting the voice of a few clients through that. That could go on. It

doesn't keep us from having the select committee go forward. I am positive that, at the very least, we would help to educate and change the view of many Ontarians about those rare diseases, do our work and bring forward some basically unanimous, nonpartisan ways forward.

New Democrats will be voting 100% in favour of putting together this select committee. Anything we can do to help the #TreatRareDisease campaign, we are willing to help. Those people are here today because they want us to do something and they want to be part of the solution. Let's not turn our back on them; let's bring them in. We can learn from them. We will learn from them. Rare diseases will change for the better because we will have a select committee.

1410

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'm pleased to stand in the House and have the opportunity to join this very important conversation, and to talk a bit, if I may, of the good work that our government is doing to improve health care services for Ontarians with a rare disease or disorder.

I'd like to recognize the member from Kitchener—Conestoga for his continued advocacy in this area, and I'd like to thank the organizations, patient groups, and those Ontarians who have a rare disease or disorder, as well as their friends and families, for their work on this issue. I know that many of them have joined us in the gallery today. Thank you for being here.

Our government is committed to putting patients first, which is why our recent budget includes increases to health care spending of \$1 billion, including \$345 million in hospitals, to ensure patients receive the right care at the right time and in the right place. Understanding the experience of those individuals who use our health care system is essential to this commitment, because when we understand their experiences, we can make the changes necessary to our system to meet their needs.

Our government knows that there are many Ontarians living with or who have family members living with rare diseases or disorders. We also know that because these conditions are rare, they can often be misdiagnosed. The effect of this is that these Ontarians face challenges in their ability to access appropriate care. We recognize the hardship and stress that this can cause and the impact it can have on people's everyday lives. We recognize, too, that we need to take action, and I want to assure Ontarians living with rare diseases or disorders, and their families, that this work is under way.

As a government, we have done much to improve access to care for these individuals, but still more needs to be done, and that needs to be acknowledged. Our goal has been and continues to be to offer the best possible care to help them. The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has been working hard with partners across Canada, leading a working group to develop a pan-Canadian rare disease strategy. As a clinician, he not only empathizes with those who suffer from rare diseases and with their families; he is committed to working with



colleagues from across our country to strategize possible solutions.

Just this week, on International Rare Disease Day on Monday, February 29, the minister announced further steps to better serve Ontarians with rare conditions.

Our government shared the report of the Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, or EDS, expert panel with the public. In response to the panel's recommendations, our government is creating a new centre of excellence clinic that will focus on diagnosing and treating adults and children living with EDS, a group of inherited disorders that affect your connective tissues, primarily your skin, joints and blood vessel walls. This new clinic would strengthen care and support for individuals and families living with EDS by offering primary care providers a single point of contact to receive information and guidelines on related signs and symptoms. It would also provide advice and feedback from clinical experts on diagnosis and treatment options, as well as make referrals to specialists, including geneticists, pediatricians and pain management professionals. The minister also announced that the clinic could be expanded to support primary care providers treating people with other rare diseases, if required.

Further to the announcement of the clinic, our government announced that we will be creating a working group comprised of Ontario experts to explore how services for people with rare diseases and disorders in Ontario can be improved. The group will look at improving early detection and prevention, providing timely and accurate diagnosis and care, and improving community supports for patients and their families. Issues such as these require advice and input from experts in the field and those with clinical experience, which is exactly the reason this working group will be made up of both.

I'd like to take this opportunity to share an excerpt regarding our government's recent announcement from the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders, or CORD: "... the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders (CORD) welcomes the announcement made by Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins to open a new clinic for patients with Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS), which could be expanded to other rare disorders, as well as his commitment to strike a working group to develop an Ontario approach to a coordinated provincial health care system for patients with rare disorders." Their president and CEO goes on to say, "Minister Hoskins' previous efforts on behalf of patients with urgent and underserved needs gives Ontario families with rare diseases great hope that his leadership and commitment will inspire other stakeholders and offer an example for other provinces."

I take pride in the support shown to our government, and that quote in particular, for our work in this area by organizations such as CORD. It reinforces our commitment to putting patients first and acknowledges our hard work on developing a plan of action.

In closing, I'd like to acknowledge an outstanding advocate in my constituency, Lynn Clark, who came to see me recently about the need for our government to work towards an approach on rare disorders. Lynn sits on

the board of the ILC, the Improving the Lives of Children Foundation, based in Halton region. She attended Minister Hoskins's announcement as a result of her passion for and commitment to finding solutions for patients. Her experiences with her daughter, Chelsea Clark, a gold-medal Paralympian, and a young woman whose challenges with chronic pain were largely misunderstood, drove Lynn to become the passionate advocate that she is.

I'd like to commend again the continued efforts by the member from Kitchener-Conestoga in advocating on behalf of Ontarians with rare diseases and disorders. He clearly shares our commitment to putting patients first and ensuring that their needs are met as quickly as possible by providing the best possible care.

Our work in this area will continue, because it must. I look forward to working together with the member opposite and, indeed, all members of this House. I want to underscore, in closing, that while we might not always agree on the mechanism for moving this forward, no one should take that as a sign or a commitment that our government doesn't care about this issue. In fact, we do, which is precisely why our minister looks forward, as I mentioned, to working with all members of this House to solve this very important and pernicious issue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm happy to stand up here with full support of this motion put forward by the member from Kitchener-Conestoga, Mike Harris, who has done a tremendous amount of work, advocacy and promotion of rare diseases in our province. He should be commended tenfold, continually, because without his work on this issue, rare diseases would still be on the back plate of this government's agenda. This motion brings it forward, and we're hoping that, through this debate, they have a change of heart and will support this motion.

Everybody, in their riding, has someone that comes knocking on their door with a rare disease, because, as Mr. Harris has mentioned, there are over 7,000 diseases. I'm going to mention two in my riding. You might hear this government, later on in this debate, talk about how they want to remove the politics from the decision-making. Sometimes you need the politics to create the structure for the bureaucrats to make the decisions necessary.

My concern is, through my two people from my riding who came forward—their concerns were because the bureaucracy was too rigid in their decision-making and not flexible. I think that when you're dealing with treating rare diseases, you need to have that flexibility in place. I believe that this motion, this committee that the member from Kitchener-Conestoga wants to create, will allow that to develop.

I have one resident who has pulmonary hypertension. She's six years old, Mr. Speaker. Not very many young children get pulmonary hypertension. That's a high blood pressure between the lungs and the heart. It's very rare and very hard to treat. In fact, the medications that they're developing, and the research, are focused around

adults, because they're the majority of people who end up getting pulmonary hypertension.

For her to get treatment, the doctors have had to mess around with the doses, and they came up with three different medications that work. Unfortunately, the government will only agree to pay for two of them. For the third one, the family is left to scrounge around to get enough money in order to give their six-year-old daughter some enjoyment in life. She has to carry around this great big oxygen tank with her. She has to have a nurse at school with her. She's six years old.

We live in a province where we think we should be doing all we can for children with rare diseases. We should be giving them a life.

My other concern in my riding is this poor little girl who suffers from Diamond-Blackfan anemia, which means her one treatment is a corticosteroid and it has to be given by the IV route.

Now, this is where this drives me nuts, this bureaucracy that has formed there. This government, which I'm thankful for, helps pay for the pumps for diabetics. This poor girl's medication can be delivered by this pump. The government pays for diabetic children, but because she has Diamond-Blackfan anemia, it's not covered. It's \$5,000 for that family. That's unheard of. How many children have this disease? How much more would it cost, actually, to pay for those additional pumps for these children? But it's a rigid structure over there that doesn't allow this to occur.

1420

Mr. Speaker, this government talks a lot about wanting to work together with us. This motion allows us to work together—all three parties working together—for solutions. I'm calling on this government to change your mind. Support this motion. Get your heads out of the sand. We can work together and make a difference. This isn't political. There's no politics in this paper. Support it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I wish we had a lot more time to talk about this particular issue, because many individuals are affected and feel like they're being left out of the discussion. They feel like their voices aren't being heard.

I was speaking to a wonderful, beautiful, articulate, blue-eyed young woman last night, whom I met through many years of working with her. She has been educating me on her behalf. She shared with me a story and an experience that she has gone through many times. But she did ask me to share an experience that she recently had over the course of this last weekend. With her permission, she granted me the opportunity of doing that. I think a lot of people will feel what this girl has felt through other diseases that are here in the province.

I just want to make sure that I can put this in and have enough time, so I'll start reading. I'd like to share the story of Paige Spencer and her recent experience while attending a hospital for care. She writes on her Facebook page, and you can check out a lot of her stories that are there.

"Hey everyone, so here's my health update: I apologize that it isn't going to be positive ... usually I'm a happy person who finds positivity in everything but lately I feel no control at all over my life...."

"The hospital really didn't help me at all Sunday night. They basically put me in a room and ignored me while I screamed in horrendous pain for two hours.

"One time when my mom went out she told them that I had to use the washroom but was in such horrible pain and was wondering when I was going to get my pain meds. They kept making excuses to delay giving me the meds and the one 'health care provider' just was rude to my mom. So after, like, about an hour of me waiting and holding, I told her just go get me a bedpan considering I'm getting over a bladder infection and it's now causing me more pain. They continued to delay for so long.

"After, like, 20 minutes a lady came in with attitude and told me there are no bedpans and that I need to get up and basically stop crying and grow up. Last time I checked a 'health care provider' is supposed to be kind and helpful. I couldn't believe her. Every time I started screaming due to feeling like my spine felt like it was going to snap, my mom was so upset seeing her daughter like this and the woman goes, 'Get used to it, honey. This is your new normal. You've just got to suck it up and be a big girl.' My mom said, 'It shouldn't be normal ... she's been suffering for too long....'

"Oh yeah and, of course, the 'health care provider' suggested that I get psychological help about 10 times. Of course, no wonder I'm depressed because every hospital I go to and every doctor who sees me are 'uninformed about Lyme' and say I'm crazy, a drug addict, or that I'm just stressed out or want attention! If that's the case, I deserve an Oscar if this is all an act.

"Anyways, they didn't offer me much help at all. They thought I was exaggerating my pain. I flipped at the doctor and was hysterically crying, telling him I can't take this pain anymore. I've never had spinal pain and I'd rather take a bullet. After my freak out at him, I could see he was a little bit more considerate and sympathetic to my situation. So they gave me pain meds, booked a neurologist appointment, and a prescription for pain meds.

"So yesterday was absolutely hell and so is today. I couldn't sleep at all last night because the pain is so intense. I'm on heavy pain meds and also marijuana oil and all of that is still not taking away the pain in my spine.

"Us Lymies are tough because we live with excruciating pain all the time but this spinal pain is absolutely horrendous. I'm so angry with my life, I'm not going to sugar-coat it.

"I handle my disease with strength and faith, but I have no clue what is going on with me anymore. No one is helping me or giving me answers.

"At home, every day my family feels completely helpless and terrified as they watch their 21-year-old daughter scream in agonizing pain. Not only am I suffering in pain physically, mentally and emotionally, but I'm suffering from guilt and anger as I watch my pain and my



disease destroy my loved ones. It's affecting their health so much that it kills me because I can't do anything about it.

"I'm so sorry for this rant; usually I'm very positive and happy about sharing my story and spreading the word about my disease. I don't like my disease or my pain control my life or allow it to destroy it. But it's hard when things start to finally go well in my life and then, bam, everything falls apart again so quickly. I know I will get through this, and I will beat this battle. I'm just going through a very hard time right now.

"This pain is just not giving up. I can only hope some doctor will want to help me. All I can do right now is try to get lots of rest and pray.

"I sincerely thank everyone for their love, support and prayers. You guys really do keep me going. Just when I want to give up, I remember how much support I have from all of you. I'm sorry I haven't gotten to replying to the emails or messages some of you sent to me. I'm just so exhausted. This message took over an hour to try and put it together. I thank everyone. I keep praying this fight will be over soon."

I thought I'd share a few comments her friends put on it. One of her friends said, "I hate this. I hate seeing my beautiful friend and her family suffering while nothing is done. When does this stop, Michael Mantha? When will the government undo this injustice? Let's hope it's not before we lose more warriors!"

My reply to her was, "This pains me to no end. It angers and fuels me to get the changes done now! Too many are suffering. I'm trying my best and will continue doing so until the job is done."

Paige replies, "Thank you, Michael. I pray one day this nightmare will end. I'm just getting very tired of being treated like this.

"We talk so much about mental health and how important it is, but they are making mine worse. I'm depressed because I'm in chronic pain, and the doctors make me feel like I'm crazy and that my life isn't important. I go to the hospital in an emergency and they yell at me and treat me like .... So I'm left to thank our medical system for making me feel suicidal. Michael, if you ever need my story, please let me know. I have no issue telling people the suffering I'm forced to endure."

I replied to her, "I do, and we will share your story!" I have, and I hope you listened.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to speak to the motion from the member from Kitchener-Conestoga. I want to congratulate him on his efforts and his advocacy for people and their families suffering with rare disorders.

I'd also like to recognize the advocacy of Ontarians with rare disorders, their families, their friends, and the organizations that stand behind them for their work and their efforts. There are many of them in the Legislature with us here today. I'd like to recognize and acknowledge their presence.

Many members in this House have someone in their extended family who suffers from a rare disorder. I can guarantee you that all members in this House have probably met a constituent who suffers from a rare disorder. It's something that affects all of our communities.

In particular in my community, a lady named Unita Louis was a very strong advocate for those suffering from sickle-cell anemia. Her son, Brent, had sickle-cell anemia. I had the opportunity to work with her and help her in organizing a conference. She did a lot of work, and her son Brent passed away in July this year. He was in his thirties. She stepped back from being an advocate, but I can still remember in 2005, when sickle-cell was added to the tests for newborn screening and the kind of difference that made in people's lives in terms of early diagnosis and the ability to provide the treatments that those suffering with sickle-cell anemia needed.

**1430**

As we know, diagnosis is an important thing. I've heard a few times here today where people haven't been diagnosed—I think the member from Kitchener-Conestoga mentioned EDS—and that's a very serious thing, because if you don't recognize what you have, it's pretty hard to treat it.

I am very pleased to say that newborn screening is housed at CHEO, in my riding of Ottawa South. Right now, I think there are 29 disorders and illnesses that they test for, and I know they are moving along in terms of trying to expand that even further. I think that's going to go a long way. By the way, we screen for the most disorders in all of Canada and we're trying to lead a pan-Canadian approach to newborn screening so that it's effective across Canada. I want to recognize that, as well as the work that the ministry is doing on the effort to pull together work on rare diseases at the pan-Canadian level.

Now, I know that people are saying the debate is not politicized, but it gets a little politicized when the actions of the government are characterized as no action. As I've said before in this Legislature, all of us have sat on this side—all of our parties. We all have had to make decisions, and we all share one common value. I think that to impugn motive on people is not the right thing to do in this Legislature, and I just want to point that out.

I think that when it comes, for instance, to therapies and new drugs, I as a legislator don't feel that I'm equipped to make those decisions. I know that I'm emotionally equipped to make those decisions, but I don't know if I can make those decisions in the best interests of the public.

I just want to bring people back to multiple sclerosis—MS—and liberation therapy. We can all remember the hope and the desire that was created at that time in patients who were suffering, and that hope was not well founded. But there was a lot of pressure, and we have to recognize that those things happen in the system.

I do want to finish by saying that I applaud the recent announcement by the minister on EDS, the report of the expert panel and the new centre here at UHN. I applaud the working group. This is being used as a model for how we treat rare diseases and how we look at the issues

around making sure that primary care is aware, making sure that—there's a lot of need for information out there.

I do want to say that I believe the actions we are taking as a government will go a long way—a very long way—to improve conditions for those suffering with rare disorders. I'm not saying it's an easy road, and I'm not saying that everything is going to get solved. What I am saying is that I believe this is the right approach, and as my father used to say, the best way to get started is just to get started.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm honoured to rise and join in the debate. I want to begin by congratulating the member for Kitchener-Conestoga. He's a real true champion of this issue, and he has taken a lot of time travelling across our province to give a voice to those people who are suffering with rare diseases—people who, in many cases, wonder if the government is listening. I want to thank him. He came to my riding of Leeds-Grenville, and we hosted a meeting in Brockville. We had a great turnout and an excellent discussion about the incredible obstacles that people with rare diseases face every day.

It's heartbreaking to hear the stories, and I have many stories I could tell today. But I want to mention a few people, like Charlie Smith and his sister, Jessica Smith-Covey, who suffer from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. They're sick and they need treatment. But some spend years looking for a doctor who won't tell them it's all in their head. Then if they're lucky enough to do that, they must fight the provincial health care system for support. As we know, far too often, that uphill battle ends with patients and their families being forced to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars or more, to travel outside of Ontario for their treatment.

All their time should be spent fighting the disease; they shouldn't have to fight the system. With the minister's announcement this week regarding an Ehlers-Danlos clinic, I think the member can take some satisfaction that his motion today is already resulting in some improvements in our system. I think you can take some congratulations for that.

But I think we all agree on this side of the House that we need to do more and that a select committee would be an excellent opportunity to provide a non-partisan forum to do that. It could allow us to hear from experts and from patients, so we can design a system that does a better job of treating rare diseases.

We're blessed in this province to have many resources. Those resources should be going to help people like little Kaiden Sturgeon. He's an eight-month-old kid whose mother, Kristen, lives in my riding. Kristen and Kaiden wanted to be here. He suffers from Sandhoff disease, an incredibly rare genetic disorder. But the trip here would just be too much for them, as with so many people who I think would have loved to be here today to be able to tell their story.

I was with Kristen's family on Saturday at an event they held to raise money so Kaiden can travel to Minnesota for treatment. I still have the bracelet that

Kaiden gave me on Saturday. With everything this family is going through, trying to look after their sick little boy, organizing fundraisers is the very last thing they should be doing, but that's the reality. That's the reality for so many families that are here today. That's what the government has made them do: They've made them fundraise for their health care.

So we owe it to Kaiden and to Jessica and to Charlie, whose lives have been shattered by a rare disease diagnosis, to make Ontario a leader in getting the treatment they desperately need. Speaker, there's one way we can do it. Michael Harris articulated it today: It's this motion. We should stop the partisan bickering and get it done.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member to use ridings.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm going to speak in favour. I'm going to allow my colleague to speak on the issue. I'd like to ask you to please support these families, and the families that can't be here today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I believe it is our duty to stand with the people who suffer from one of the 7,000 rare diseases and who are calling on us to help them. The stories I heard from two patients in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound are truly harrowing. They are a nine-month-old little girl, Darcey Papineau, and six-year-old Michael McManaman.

Dan and Dionne Papineau wrote me after their nine-month-old daughter, Darcey, was admitted to SickKids for the second time, back in November. Darcey was diagnosed with aHUS, atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome, a rare blood disorder. Up until that day, the family had never even heard of this disease. They said that Darcey initially responded well to a dialysis type of treatment, where doctors removed her plasma and replaced it with new. But when her blood counts didn't stay stable and dropped, Darcey was readmitted.

When the parents contacted me, Darcey was going into day 3 of plasma transfusions. The doctors advised them that Darcey will, at some point, likely require a drug called eculizumab, which is not covered by OHIP and costs approximately \$500,000 per year. I don't know who in Ontario could afford such astronomical drug costs, but the Papineaus certainly cannot.

I quote from Darcey's mom. "It is heartbreaking," her mom said to me, "to think that at some point money (or rather, a lack of) will dictate our daughter's quality of life ... To think that as parents, we would be unable to afford to give her that feeling all of the time is simply heartbreaking. We are asking that you lend your support to MPP Harris's bill."

Amanda McManaman's story is very similar. Again, it is a story of struggling, coping and living a parent's worst nightmare. Her son Michael was born with phenylketonuria, PKU, an inherited metabolic disorder found in approximately one in 12,000 infants born in Canada. If left untreated, symptoms of PKU can range from mild cognitive impairment to severe intellectual disability and epilepsy. It is critical to the child's brain development



that the appropriate treatment is initiated immediately and maintained throughout life.

Ontario listed KUVAN in February 2013, but the highly restrictive criteria are preventing patients who respond to KUVAN from qualifying for publicly funded access to this brain-protecting treatment, including her son Michael. Amanda wrote multiple letters to the Minister of Health to ask why patients are not getting access to life-saving KUVAN, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment for PKU.

1440

She wrote:

“While your government says they cover the cost of KUVAN for those with PKU, the reality is it doesn’t, because no patient has been able to access it to date.... For those living with PKU who are responders to this drug, the evidence thus far shows that it improves one’s quality of life by preventing further cognitive, psychiatric problems, and further permanent disabilities, which would alleviate pressures on the health care system.... It really takes a village to raise a child, but sometimes it takes more. And in my case, because Michael was born with this rare, genetic, life-long condition, it’s going to take help from you, our provincial government, to ensure that he has what he needs most for the rest of his life—this medication.... That is why I am asking you to start protecting the brains of children and adults living with PKU, by following the guidance of medical experts, in Ontario and worldwide, and immediately rewrite the KUVAN criteria to make the drug accessible to all patients who respond to it.”

Darcey and Michael are two faces of the rare diseases Ontarians are fighting. They need and they deserve to have the very best treatment options moving forward. I urge the members opposite to vote with us, to vote with Michael Harris and all the people of Ontario.

I want to acknowledge Michael—and he’s way too humble. He’s doing it for the right reasons. He’s doing it for those thousands of people out there who are doing it. He has raised, through compassion, the awareness of this debilitating situation for many, many families—and as well, to his staff who have done the research and travelled with him across this province.

I believe John Adams is in the gallery, and I would like to acknowledge him as well. He met with me last week. He’s a sufferer and he came to me, again, from personal convictions, to try to get us to listen, to try to make our provincial government listen and make sure we have the ability.

This all-party select committee is the ability. As the member across the floor said, the best way to start is to just start. Today, every single member of this Legislature can put their hand up with a positive. They can vote for this select committee and they can truly make that step, make a difference in the lives of everyone suffering with a rare disorder.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga. You have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I thank all of those rare disease sufferers who are here with us today, who travelled from across the province, from all corners, to come and hear today’s debate. I want to really give them a shout-out and thank them for that.

Of course, I’d like to thank my own caucus colleagues for those kind words and the stops along the way, and those in the NDP caucus for their support in moving this campaign forward. My colleague mentioned my staff. Rob, Jacqueline, Sydney, Sadie and Norma all did tremendous work on this file, and I’d like to thank them for sure on that.

As well, to the government caucus who previously indicated their support, I look forward to thanking you, should that support in fact come through.

Speaker, as I’ve been listening to today’s debate, I have been struck by the possibility that the government will choose to turn their backs to those in the gallery and those across the province watching on. I’ve listened to the government members and listened to the minister’s unfortunate answers to my questions earlier today and, honestly, I have a hard time believing what I’ve heard. I find it hard to believe the minister could hide behind yet another closed-door working group to reject our proposal for a transparent, all-party, public select committee to tour the province, hear from experts, the sufferers, and use the first-hand experience to develop meaningful, lasting recommendations for rare disease treatment in Ontario.

Just outside these doors, the minister tried to suggest today that the working group would take the politicians out of the process, but he knows as well as I the recent successful history of the all-party select committees. Too many times, we’ve seen announcements of government intentions to address these issues, as we heard earlier this week, and too many times we’ve seen the announcements used an excuse for inaction. There’s absolutely no reason why we cannot support the minister’s working group and the select committee. When it comes to rare diseases, it’s the patients who are the experts, and it’s those experts we need to hear from.

Today, we have the opportunity to rise together to meet the challenges faced by those who have suffered in isolation for far too long. Think about the stories we’ve heard today. Think about the patients and do the right thing in supporting them and supporting my motion.

Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We’ll take the vote on this item at the end of regular business.

## LICENSED HOME INSPECTORS ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR LES INSPECTEURS D’HABITATIONS TITULAIRES D’UN PERMIS

Mr. Dong moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 165, An Act to regulate home inspectors / Projet de loi 165, Loi visant à réglementer les inspecteurs d’habitations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'm privileged to rise today to speak to my private member's bill, titled Licensed Home Inspectors Act. I want to begin by welcoming the stakeholders who are in the gallery and who have remained committed to building a healthy home inspection industry: Len Inkster and Patrick Auriol from the Ontario Association of Certified Home Inspectors, Murray Parish and David Hellyer from the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors, Graham Clarke and T.J. Smith, as well as William Stratas from Eagle Audit. I want to recognize the hard work they've done in support of all home inspectors, and I want to make sure that work does not go unnoticed.

My EA, Shawn Ogborne, my former OLIP intern Sara O'Sullivan and I brought this bill forward to enhance consumer protection for homeowners and to unify the industry.

The purchase of a home is one of the largest investments homeowners will make in their lifetime. That investment should be protected. Many homebuyers, especially first-time buyers, rely on the expert opinion of a home inspector with regard to the condition of a potential home. However, if you ask homebuyers whether or not they know home inspection is a nonregulated industry, I believe many would be shocked to hear that is no regulated body to license or regulate.

There is no way for consumers to confidently know their home inspector is meeting the high and consistent standards we expect in Ontario. I have heard over and over from constituents about challenges they have faced with their home purchases that could have been flagged by a qualified home inspector. Now, there are several hard-working home inspector associations that are dedicated to the professionalism of the industry. These associations, some of whom are in the gallery today, have given the industry a strong foundation to build on. However, these associations have varied governing systems and requirements that could be confusing to average consumers.

Industry stakeholders whom I've consulted with have expressed strong support for regulating the industry to make sure it's sustainable and trusted by Ontarians. This bill, if passed, will create one licensing regime operating under an independent board that reflects different aspects of the home inspection industry. The delegated administrative authority, or DAA, will carry out licensing and other regulatory responsibilities at arm's length to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services.

Regulation by an industry-funded DAA is a way to ensure a more level playing field for home inspectors to operate with similar qualifications. By enforcing a single standard, the DAA would provide greater transparency and consumer protection in the ever-changing market.

This bill also proposes accountability measures such as minimum mandatory insurance, a code of ethics and other requirements which will be determined in the

regulation process. Licensed by the proposed DAA, qualified home inspectors will earn the legal title of "licensed home inspector," which symbolizes professionalism and industry standard. In short, the creation of a home inspection DAA would provide consistent, reliable service by licensed home inspectors at an affordable price.

During the consultation process, some asked me, Why a DAA model? Five years ago, Mr. Don Drummond, a prominent economist, published a report that later became known as the Drummond report. In it, Drummond referenced the delegated administrative authority review. This review found that the DAA model worked effectively and efficiently as a regulatory body for consumer protection. The benefits of a DAA were found to be reducing cost to government and reducing size of government as service delivery is transferred to an external, not-for-profit service provider, improving regulatory outcomes and improving efficiency. Government oversight is retained, and there is increased industry engagement through participation on the board.

1450

The Drummond report and the DAA review have confirmed that a DAA is the best body to regulate home inspectors. But most importantly, a DAA model was the recommendation of the 2013 panel and was seen as the most beneficial to the majority of those we've consulted.

As mentioned earlier, I have heard issues from many of my constituents in Trinity-Spadina. In one incident, an individual made a large investment in a condo purchase downtown. After electing not to have an inspection done, this individual found a problem that is now causing the family extreme irritation and discomfort in their home. In hindsight, this issue could have been easily flagged by a qualified inspector.

In addition to speaking to constituents, I spent a long period of time speaking to a variety of stakeholders in the home inspection industry about issues such as getting complaints from consumers about an individual calling himself a home inspector; searching for the individual in the association records only to find out that they don't belong to their association; and needing to refer the consumer to make a complaint elsewhere because the person is not part of their association.

The DAA would make navigation easier for consumers: Either they are licensed and can be found through the DAA, or they're not licensed and are breaking the law. They told me that home inspectors do more than just inspect the house: They act as consultants to homebuyers by also educating them on how to take care of their beloved homes.

Another interesting use of a home inspection would take place before a major renovation. Based on his or her knowledge and expertise, a licensed inspector would spot potential issues, helping the owner to minimize or avoid financial loss.

Many stakeholders mentioned that in the hot real estate market, individuals are waiving the option of having a home inspection. I view this as a great loss, es-



pecially to first-time homeowners, who, without a home inspection, are taking a risk on their investment and on their family's health and safety. If passed, the home inspection DAA will build up the profile of the home inspection industry and inject consumer confidence into this invaluable service, encouraging more consumers to utilize home inspectors.

In 2013, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services brought together an expert panel to look at qualified home inspectors. The panel included home inspectors, consumer advocates, educators and other professionals in sectors such as real estate, law and insurance. The panel prepared a comprehensive report that recommends the regulation of home inspectors. I want to thank the minister, who's not here right now—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, no, you can't do that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would remind the member that we're not supposed to make reference—

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you, Speaker.

I want to thank the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for bringing the panel together this past summer, reaffirming the report and continuing to take a leadership role in consumer protection.

Home inspectors provide an important service to Ontarians as they have the ability to assess a home the way an average consumer cannot. The longevity of the industry very much depends on the trust of Ontarians. Unfortunately, just one unqualified home inspector could breach that trust. A home inspection DAA would allow consumers to know with certainty that the home inspector they're hiring is qualified and competent.

Given the record-breaking real estate transactions taking place in Ontario, more than ever we need a reliable, affordable home inspection industry. This bill is about protecting consumers, ensuring sustainability of an industry and upholding the principles of transparency and accountability.

In closing, I respectfully ask the members of this House for your support for better protection for homeowners and a stronger home inspection industry.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill 165, An Act to regulate home inspectors.

This government is indeed sending out mixed messages. First, in the spring of 2012, the Minister of Consumer Services, Ms. Best, states that the number of complaints does not warrant regulation. A year later, the then Minister of Consumer Services strikes an expert panel on home inspection regulation, which reports back in 2013, recommending the regulation of home inspectors. Then we see no action by this government until one of their members, the member from Trinity-Spadina, who obviously is as fed up with this Liberal government's inaction as the people of Ontario and the official opposition, tables his own private member's bill.

While I commend the member on finally taking action and not waiting for a government bill, I am concerned

that this bill is issued without taking into consideration the results of the expert panel. It is just a renamed copy of the Condominium Management Services Act. The people of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors deserve more.

First of all, if the government is indeed writing legislation, as their action might suggest, we ask them to move on it, because the people of Ontario and the home inspectors need protection. Secondly, we need some important amendments to this legislation.

While we acknowledge that it is important legislation, we are very concerned that this bill creates an agency with so much power and so little oversight and accountability. The new authority is under no oversight by the Ombudsman or any other officers of the Legislature, except the Auditor General, who will be unable to review any of the individual cases that arise. When we talk about one's home and the purchase or sale of it, the issues can be catastrophic to Ontario families.

This bill specifically places the authority outside the review of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Since the government is writing its own bill, we would ask for the same amendments to it as to this bill: oversight by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies and all the Legislature's independent officers; application of the sunshine list; and ministerial power to review and modify the authority's regulations and bylaws as required.

In addition, the minister took the time to consult with the industry. Let's ensure that those recommendations are considered in the legislation that is passed in this Legislature.

Speaker, the purchase of a home is probably the largest investment the average Ontario family makes, and they expect more from this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** As always, it's an honour to be called upon in Ontario's provincial Parliament and to speak on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Windsor-Tecumseh.

Bill 165 is An Act to regulate home inspectors. I think it's a sound act. In fact, I had been working on an identical bill; I started last fall. My friend the member for Trinity-Spadina beat me to the punch—I was kidding him about that when he introduced Bill 165. As I've said in the House before, a good idea is a good idea no matter where it comes from.

Back on November 3, Helmut Stautt was sitting in the gallery over here. He was a visitor in the members' gallery because his grandson Cameron Rodzik was the page captain that day. I was spending some time with the Rodzik family and the Stautts explaining procedure, and Helmut said, "Can I ask you a question?" I said, "Sure." He said, "Why don't we regulate home inspectors in Ontario?" I said, "I don't know. I'll look into it."

So we started making some calls—started calling around. I had my legislative assistant, Angie Dawson, contact some people in the library and so on. I did so

because I had heard before from family members and friends who were buying homes and weren't really satisfied with the advice or the report they got from their home inspector, because things happened at the end of it. It ended up costing them a lot more money.

**1500**

I was always under the impression, as I'm sure a lot of us were in this province, that home inspectors had to be trained, educated, certified, and had to be experienced.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Anybody can be a home inspector. Percy Hatfield: home inspector.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** There you go.

After speaking with Helmut and checking it out, I found out that wasn't the case. As you know, Speaker, there's a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes when you're starting to put together a private member's bill. I mean, we even reached out to Mike Holmes, the TV guy; he's going to correct all the deficiencies, right?

Anyway, I'll be supporting the bill, as will members of the NDP caucus. That's not to say that the bill can't be improved.

The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has said in the past, as the member from Eglinton-Lawrence just said, that anyone with a business card and a flashlight can call themselves a home inspector in this province.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** No, I said it, then he said it.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Was that you, Minister?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** That was me.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** That was you? I'm sorry.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I started all this, actually.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Oh, well, okay.

What's needed, Speaker, is a strict and regulated training and education component in the bill. As I understand it, across Canada there are, like, 3,000 people earning an income as home inspectors but no single set of standards for obtaining the professional designation as a home inspector.

Believe it or not, Speaker, I know that if you're inclined—and I hope you're not—but should you choose to do so, you can go online today, fill in some forms and pay a fee, of course, and get a certificate suitable for framing mailed to you within a matter of days. You don't even have to buy a flashlight or a ladder, and you'll be a home inspector.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Instant home inspectors. That's a good job for you, Speaker.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Yes, it works, right?

We should be aiming higher, Speaker. We should be having the highest standards. I know we should make it mandatory for home inspectors to have to take and pass a formal course at a community college. If plumbers and electricians have to spend up to 9,000 hours learning their trade, shouldn't the men and women who are going to go in and inspect their work, who tell me, "Yes, the home is worth buying; it's not going to burn down and the toilets are going to flush," know what they're looking at? They should have some on-the-job training, as well as classroom training, to know what they're doing.

I would hope that whoever earns a living as a driving instructor actually has a driver's licence, and I hope my doctor has graduated from medical school, so I would hope a home inspector actually has some experience in the field.

The bill should protect consumers. We know the government is taking us down a path towards energy efficient audits before a home can be sold, so why not enhance the home inspector certification program so that these folks will actually be trained as energy auditors, as well? And the bill should insist that a registry of qualified inspectors be available in every region of the province.

Speaker, as you know, the ministry of consumer services started this, and I think the minister was the minister back in 2013 when you started this—

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Thank you; yes, I was.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It's a slow process.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Eglinton-Lawrence, would you come to order?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My first choice would like to see this as a government bill. Make no mistake about it, it should be a government bill. For whatever reason, the government has decided not to bring it in as a government bill but to encourage the member for Trinity-Spadina—and thank you for doing this—to proceed with a private member's bill.

I hope that the government will see to it that this bill is sent to committee, listen to the witnesses and pass it to bring it back here, and that we get on with it. We shouldn't allow it to languish. The government should make this bill happen. We should have trained inspectors adhering to an established code of ethics, and I hope they have all kinds of insurance as a prerequisite, in case they mess it up and you and I are left out in the cold.

I hope the government isn't making a mistake by not making it a government bill. I hope we'll get it passed. I want to thank the member from Trinity-Spadina for bringing this forward, because the government chose not to, and I want to thank my constituent Helmet Stautt for bringing it to my attention last fall.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I will be sharing my time today with the members from Beaches-East York, Newmarket-Aurora and Eglinton-Lawrence.

I couldn't agree more with what has been said, that purchasing a home is the single biggest investment that people will make in their lifetimes. It is so important that buyers are aware of the condition of their new home, both from a financial investment and safety perspective.

In my previous life, working in residential and commercial renovation, interior design and rental property ownership, I saw first-hand the importance of a thorough and proper home inspection. Home inspectors have the skills and knowledge to inspect a home in a lot more detail than the average buyer, and even the foresight to anticipate problems in the future. Unfortunately, they are not all created equal.



I have benefited greatly from home inspectors' services, both personally in the purchase of my own home and as part of my professional work. My brother, on the other hand, experienced some life-changing difficulties. He purchased a home that had mould in the basement. It was not discovered during the home inspection, and he lived in that home for several years before he realized that he was inflicting permanent damage to his lungs. Since that time, he has endured years of difficulty breathing, numerous lengthy hospital stays, and massive doses of prednisone, which have depleted his bone mass to a fraction of what it once was, to the point where he can break ribs from coughing. His lungs function at 30% of their normal capacity. Surely, there is nothing worse than watching a loved one struggle for every breath.

While the majority of home inspectors adopt high standards and are registered with one or more home inspector associations, currently anyone—as has already been said—can become a home inspector in Ontario. There are also nine different home inspection associations or certification bodies operating in Ontario, with varying levels of qualifications and requirements.

If a homebuyer is not diligent in requesting the qualifications and registration of the home inspector they have contracted, they can become inadvertent victims. This should not be about luck; this is about consumer protection. Homebuyers should feel secure that when they contract a home inspector, they can expect minimum and uniform qualifications, standards of practice and provision of services. Bill 165 would create those requirements and standards.

I'm also very supportive of the accountability measures proposed in Bill 165, which would include mandatory minimum insurance, a code of ethics and a consumer complaint process. The Ministry of Government and Consumer Services is actively working on addressing this issue and has committed to moving forward with the development of a legislative framework to regulate home inspectors.

Requiring that home inspectors be licensed would ensure consumer protection and a fair marketplace. I want to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for his work on this important issue and for bringing this bill forward. I'm happy to lend my support and I encourage all members in the House to do the same.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm pleased to add my voice to the discussion.

First, under no circumstances am I in favour of an unregulated home inspection industry. In my view, when the barriers to entry are too low, it is very difficult for the consumer to feel safe from less-than-desirable practices; and, in fairness, it also makes it awkward for the reputable home inspection operators out there to distinguish themselves from those less reputable.

Like others before it, this industry has expected regulation for some time, but these business people also have concerns surrounding the appointment of the interim

board of directors, whether there will be a transitional period and whether or not registered, professional and law-abiding home inspectors will be grandfathered under the proposed legislation.

The other key concern with this proposed legislation is that it yet again seems to delegate authority from above. There appears to have been little or no interaction with the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors, the very people who will be directly impacted by the passage of this legislation. Frankly, this fact alone is troubling.

**1510**

Then, Mr. Speaker, there is the lack of oversight by anyone other than the Auditor General of Ontario. For any home inspection licensing authority, it is our party's recommendation that the Legislature have oversight, that the sunshine list apply and that there be ministerial powers to squash the authority's regulations and bylaws. Let's get some true oversight and accountability in the proposed legislation being considered.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I want to put on the record my thoughts in regard to such legislation.

I think at one time or another most of us, in our constituency offices, have had somebody who has come through the door and said, "I bought a house" or "I bought a condo," and the following thing has happened: There's no mechanism for them to be made whole for the loss that they incurred due to the condition of the unit that they've bought that was actually substandard but passed by a home inspector. I'm sure we've seen that in all of our constituencies.

I recall some of the ones that I've had to deal with. One particular individual and his wife, like everybody else, worked hard and put the money away in order to get a down payment to buy their first house. They go out and buy the house. The thing is inspected and they buy it. The mortgage is done. They take possession of the house. And then they start to find out that there are problems with the foundation. As a result of the problem with the foundation, there needed to be repairs done to the house which ended up costing a fair amount of money.

When they went back—this was within a couple of years of having bought the house but it was over the one year that you have some coverage—they ended up having to spend tens of thousands of dollars to fix the problem. Lo and behold, there's nobody who's liable for what should have been caught if there had been a proper home inspection. It turned out, in this case, that the person who did the home inspection didn't know what they were doing and they allowed something to be unseen in the inspection that wasn't reported to the buyers. As a result, they were out literally tens of thousands of dollars.

I have another one—not in my constituency, but a cousin of mine in Sudbury. He buys a house for hundreds of thousands of dollars, lives there for a couple of years, and what had happened, he finds out, is that house was built in two stages. It all looks like one if you look at it

now because construction means allow you to do that. The foundation on the second part of the house—guess what?—is not holding up too well. As a result, the house started to subside on the one side and it's thrown the attached decks out, it's cracked the walls and it's cracked the ceilings. So he's gone through this entire process of trying to recapture the money necessary in order to do the repairs, which are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

I was there last week and I got to see it because they are working on it as we speak. You hear them doing the work that they've got to do on changing the footing and the foundation. Oh, my God, you should see what they're doing there. But here, lo and behold, they have a house that they've now got to put an extra couple of hundred thousand dollars into. What is that going to do to their position of equity on that house? Again, why? Because when the house was purchased, it had been inspected, and the inspector missed whatever had to be caught so that they could then make a decision on how to negotiate the price of the house on sale.

But the other issue is that if we do this right—I would hope this is something that we include in the legislation, should this become law—the home inspector has to be carrying some kind of insurance in order to make sure that the buyer is protected in the event that the inspection misses something, so that there's a liability issue that is dealt with. Now, there's obviously all of the other stuff that goes with this: making sure home inspectors are actually home inspectors and are certified and they know what they're doing. But there should also be some sort of liability insurance, in the same way that most of us have liability insurance.

I'm an electrician by trade. I worked in construction and maintenance in the mining sector, but if I was in the construction sector, I would have to have liability insurance on the work that I do because—who knows?—there may be a fire; there may be something that's happened with the workmanship or the people who work for me or myself. If it causes harm to the building or it causes some sort of damage, then you have to be able to cover those losses, and you have to carry liability insurance.

There should be the same kind of thing, I would hope, for home inspectors. I think this is something that has been brought to the House before, and I congratulate all of those who have raised this issue a number of times. Who knows? Maybe this is like strike one, strike two and, boy, you hit the ball out of the park—you never know.

We've got to hope that this bill actually gets to go forward and deals with making sure that consumers are properly protected when it comes to making what is, in most cases, the biggest purchase in a person's life or a couple's life: buying that home. You're going to need to make sure that you're able to provide them with adequate protection when it comes to that investment they make in their family home.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm delighted to be able to stand and speak to this bill and support the member for Trinity-Spadina on this very important piece of legislation. As virtually everyone has said as they've gotten up to speak, buying a home, for the vast majority of Ontarians, is the single biggest purchase you're going to make in your lifetime, and it is so important to protect that purchase.

Many years ago, in a different life, I was the executive director of the Consumers' Association of Canada here in Ontario. We had about 60,000 members in those days, and it always amazed me that people would spend days and days, and months and months, researching what car they were going to buy, but they would see a house and buy it, and bind themselves to a contract—a mortgage—that would last seemingly hundreds of years into the future. Those were the days when home inspectors started to really come on the scene. The markets were very hot, and it was so important to have someone to give you that second sober advice as to whether or not you should purchase a house. But we began to receive complaints that some of the people weren't properly trained. Some were great. In fact, the vast majority of home inspection people that I've dealt with over the years, including the gentleman that I've used when I've purchased homes, are absolutely fantastic and worth every penny I've put into them, quite frankly. I continue to go back to the chap that I used as we do renovations over the years.

But there are so many people who don't understand the value of a home inspection, and if they do, they're at a loss. They have no idea who they should hire. Just last week, I was talking to an individual who hired a home inspector who told them that the prospective house they were about to purchase was filled with mould in the attic. They hired another inspector who came and said, no, in fact, that's not mould. And when they looked a little further, the first individual ran a company that did mould remediation. So I suspect that somewhere down the road, they were going to come back and want to clean that mould up.

I know this type of licensing will go a long way to fixing that type of mischief. As I said earlier, the vast number of home inspectors I've worked with and heard about do a really good job, but I think the industry as a whole has matured. It needs to be standardized. If you hire a home inspector in the Soo, they should have the same skill set as a home inspector in my riding of Newmarket-Aurora or one in the riding of Trinity-Spadina. So I look forward to that.

I want to perhaps correct a bit of information that the member for Whitby-Oshawa put forward. There was an awful lot of consultation, extensive consultation, done by the government with all sorts of groups in pulling this forward. In fact, there are representatives from a number of those organizations in the visitors' gallery, and judging by the smiles on their faces, I suspect they are in favour of what the member from Trinity-Spadina is moving ahead with today. There was extensive consultation with



consumer groups, extensive consultation with real estate agents and lawyers—the whole gamut of people who work with home sales, and they'll tell you, I know, that this is really good legislation. This is excellent consumer protection legislation.

1520

Again, I commend the member for Trinity–Spadina for moving it forward, and I look forward to everyone supporting it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to rise today and voice some concerns about this issue and Bill 165.

I would say that for the vast majority of my constituents in York–Simcoe, their home is probably the largest investment they will make in their lifetime. A home inspector can help prospective owners evaluate the true value of a home and identify any potential issues: everything from the exterior shell to the internal systems of heating, plumbing and wiring.

Home inspection is currently regulated under a voluntary registration framework, administered by the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors. Unfortunately, it is my understanding that they were not consulted in the drafting of this proposed legislation.

But I think it's also an opportunity to have a discussion on the fundamental importance of having that third-party validation. What comes to mind whenever we're talking about the kind of investment that a home is that we must not forget caveat emptor—buyer beware—and the fact that you have to be proactive in looking at that big investment you're about to make.

I have to tell a personal story: Years ago, when my husband and I were looking for a place, we saw one that, on the surface, we thought was absolutely perfect, and we were so excited that this particular piece of property was on the market. My mother said to me, "You know, dear, that's an older house, and it's got a complex property around it. You maybe should consult with somebody to find out what should happen. When you consider the cost of the house versus the cost of asking a home inspector to come and have a look at it, it would perhaps be a good investment." Well, it was such a good investment that we didn't buy the house. I often think of that as a demonstration of how important it is to have somebody with that kind of expertise.

The other example I have is as an MPP, where a group of residents came to see me about some egregious things that were happening. They were happening in line with about 14 houses, where the garage and the house were sort of coming apart; they were separating. Of course, it meant pools of water collecting, it meant leakage into the basement—some serious concerns that they had. I tell this story because of the fact that it eventually drew in the local building inspector and other experts and so forth. This is a cautionary tale to tell about this particular example: that people need to understand that they have to drive this process, and that we can't have building

inspectors and home inspections and the two don't meet, or there's too much red tape or it's too narrowly defined what is actually the purview of a town employee—the building inspector—and the home inspection person.

I think this is well-intentioned, but we need to have further debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd just like to add my voice to this debate. I fully support this bill because buying a home is one of the biggest risks you take in your life, and to mitigate risk you should be able to surround yourself with people who can help you. A home inspector is one of those people; and most people naturally think that a home inspector is someone who is fully qualified, fully regulated. We hear a lot about how people don't like red tape, but one place you want red tape is that you want a qualified home inspector. So I fully support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to speak towards it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm delighted to be able to rise in support of the member from Trinity–Spadina's bill. I appreciate very much his articulation of the reasons why this bill is necessary, and I'm delighted to hear the support that we're getting from the other side of the House, who also recognize how important this is.

I think I mentioned the other day that I've just moved into my new house in the Beach. I'm no longer represented by the member from Toronto–Danforth; I've moved into the Beach. I didn't have the opportunity to use a home inspector when I bought this property because the market was so hot. They put it on the market on a Friday. We saw it on Friday, saw it again on Saturday morning and bought it Saturday afternoon in what's known as a bully bid, because they weren't going to take offers until Tuesday. If I had to wait around to get a building inspector to take a look at it and reassure myself that it was worth the money, I would never have got it. So we just jumped right in.

But my secret was that my real estate agent used to be a builder. My real estate agent, Roger Kilgour, is also known as Guy. Guy took me through the house—the little nooks and crannies—and did a check from a builder's perspective. Guy is really knowledgeable about this, and using Guy's advice, I go forward and we buy the house. In fact, we paid a little bit more than the asking price. I needn't go into the details; it seems unnecessary.

The very first house I bought, I bought with the assistance of a very qualified home inspector. He was my uncle, Howard Rober—my middle name comes from him—my mother's brother. His wife, Auntie Mary Lou, is the most incredible apple pie cook imaginable.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Arthur, where do you live?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** In the Beach.

So when I bought this new house, I'm anticipating, now that we're into the new house—she always brings by

some apple pie. I'm hoping she will read this Hansard in due course and remember that's one of her obligations.

But my uncle was a trained house inspector and went on to become a real estate agent, and the same kind of relationship: Because he understood the bones of a house, he was able to go in with a buyer and bring that added expertise.

The member from York-Simcoe did raise the Latin "caveat emptor." I was hoping I'd be the first one to spring a little Latin on the House, and I'm delighted that she got in there first. "Buyer beware" is what it means, short and simple. But it also means that the buyer alone is responsible for checking the quality and suitability of the goods before a purchase is made. That's what a home inspector does for you, because you can't be an expert in all things.

So the buyer, exercising caveat emptor, goes and retains the professional services of someone in order to satisfy himself that that's in fact the right thing to do. And I agree with the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane that there have to be penalties and insurances attached for errors and omissions. That's an incredibly important part of this bill, and I think that the member from Trinity-Spadina has it absolutely right in the way he has framed the bill.

I'm also delighted that this is going to a delegated administrative authority that is not going to cost the taxpayer of Ontario a cent, except for maybe the early minor cost of the set-up, but it'll be paid for and administered on the basis of the fees they collect from the home inspectors, who could easily absorb this as part of the work they do.

I would also like to say that I agree with the member for Whitby-Oshawa that there has to be greater oversight of delegated administrative authorities. I would be quite open—I hope the member will be—maybe to having that they are part of the sunshine list, because I think that the public, as part of its protection, should know how much we're paying senior administrators in all of our delegated authorities, including the Electrical Safety Authority, because that is where money hits the road: What are we paying those executives to protect the public? Thank you very much, Speaker. Good bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I, too, am pleased to stand today and lend my voice to the debate on Bill 165, An Act to regulate home inspectors. For Ontarians, as has been alluded to, purchasing a home is an investment in their future and their family, and probably the greatest spend they'll ever make. It affects everything, in terms of quality of life to the taxes they pay to where their children will go to school. As part of this process, homebuyers will often look to home inspectors to help them assess the true value of a property or determine if there are any issues that need to be addressed, all to ensure that they're getting the most bang for their buck.

I'm pleased it to be able to say, on behalf of the PC Party of Ontario, that we're looking to support this

particular bill, but we want to see specific amendments as well.

**1530**

In my brief time I want to touch on two things: first, a disturbing trend that we're seeing from this government over and over again, and that is the continued lack of consultation that this Liberal government is providing to our stakeholders from every industry. The other disturbing trend is the creation of yet another unaccountable authority.

A week ago in this very House, when debating Bill 151, I spoke about the worry I heard from stakeholders of this new authority that's being created through that particular bill enactment. Here we are again, creating yet another authority that, more times than not, this government totally forgets to provide parameters for in terms of performance measures and accountability. We have to ensure that we get better. In doing so, we're going to have some very explicit amendments based on input that we've received from stakeholders.

I just have a few seconds left, actually; time flies by. One thing that I'm very interested in: My friend Ken from Hesson, Ontario, in the riding of Perth-Wellington, went to school, did his homework and made the investment in getting proper training to be a home inspector. We need to ensure that we carry through that credibility and that consistency of offering to make sure that when somebody gets a home inspector, they all are working towards the same standard. We're going to be looking into the amendments with that specific regard.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for Trinity-Spadina. You have two minutes for a reply.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I would like to thank the members who have spoken to my bill, including the members from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Windsor-Tecumseh, Kingston and the Islands, Whitby-Oshawa, Timmins-James Bay, Newmarket-Aurora, York-Simcoe, Timiskaming-Cochrane, Beaches-East York and Huron-Bruce. I thank you very much for your comments on Bill 165.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognize the current Minister of Children and Youth Services, who had this portfolio in her previous term. I agree with the member from Windsor-Tecumseh that she has done an excellent job on this file. She has consulted widely with experts, individuals and professionals in this field.

I also recognize the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for his support on this bill, as well as his tireless work on consumer protection. I look forward to working with him on strengthening the home inspector industry.

I noticed that members in this House brought up concerns on whether this is being consulted widely. I can assure them that I did the best I could to cast a wide net for opinions, not just to constituents but as well to experts in the industry. Some of those long-time advocates are here with us in the gallery.

I noted that the support is there, but there was some caution to make sure that the details will be looked after.



I look forward to discussions during the committee process.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

TRANSPARENCY  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING  
ACT, 2016  
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE  
ET LA RESPONSABILISATION  
EN MATIÈRE DE MARCHÉS PUBLICS

Ms. Fife moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations and Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, 2016 and to amend the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008 / Projet de loi 167, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la transparence et la responsabilisation en matière de privatisations et de partenariats public-privé et modifiant la Loi de 2008 sur la négociation collective dans les collèges.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It is always a privilege to be able to introduce a piece of legislation that speaks to and proposes a solution that affects the lives of Ontarians. To say that the crafting of this legislation has been a group effort would be an understatement. I am proud that the voices and experiences of public sector workers are reflected in Bill 167.

Joining us today in the members' gallery are several members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union executive board, including president Smokey Thomas and vice-president and treasurer Eddy Almeida. In addition, Chris Watson is here from CUPE. Welcome back to Queen's Park, and thanks for being here today.

This piece of legislation is long overdue. I think there is some consensus around supporting Bill 167, which, given the body of evidence with regard to poor contract oversight, expense and cost to human life, shouldn't be too surprising. This bill deals with public-private partnerships and the contracting out of public services with regard to P3s, what this government likes to call alternative financing procurement, specific to infrastructure. Given the stated investment promise of now \$160 billion over 12 years, as announced in budget 2016, this debate is timely—given the growing and emerging trend of all levels of government, from all jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, to review and reverse the use of public-private partnerships; given their track record of poor service delivery, cost overruns and high cost of financing.

In this province, recently, a respected academic at the University of Toronto argued that renting money from capital markets is more expensive than issuing government bonds because private investors pay significantly higher interest rates than governments do.

The United Kingdom should serve as a cautionary tale for Ontario. The debate on public-private partnerships—or, as they are called in the UK, private financing initiatives—has come full circle. A 2011 National Audit Office report—the equivalent of our AG—said that the use of P3s “has the effect of increasing the cost of finance for public investments relative to what would be available to the government if it borrowed on its own account,” and “the price of finance is significant higher with a PFI.”

Currently, the British government is paying for the mistakes of billions in P3 spending by slashing public services again and again, something we are already seeing in the province of Ontario.

We should learn from these other jurisdictions that we need to be cautious about P3 contracts. Bill 167 provides a solution that ensures public oversight, transparency and accountability.

Even municipalities in the United States—the city of Chicago is making changes to prevent future P3 boondoggles. In November 2015, their city council passed an ordinance requiring independent evaluation, public hearings and ongoing oversight among other safeguards that will be required for future privatizations of city assets or public services. Their planner even said that it will provide “an insurance policy for the public,” something we need in the province of Ontario. And we agree.

Ontario's Auditor General has done this province a great service by exposing and questioning the practice employed by Infrastructure Ontario around the design, build and financing of P3s. I hope that we can agree that no government should borrow money at rates as high as 28% when they can do so at 2.9%—noting that this was one of the first times that any Auditor General questioned the fundamental methodology of P3s.

The Ontario Auditor General went on to question the whole underpinnings of the risk transfer justification. She found that there was absolutely no empirical data supporting the valuation of the cost of risks transferred to the private sector by P3s. The risks to justify the enormously higher costs, she reported, were anecdotal. Many people know the story now. She reviewed 74 P3 projects. She found that we paid \$8 billion more than the traditional public procurement. That buys a lot of health care.

It needs to be said that those who unequivocally defend the P3 model almost always have a pecuniary interest or a financial interest in the transfer of wealth from the public sector to the private sector. They defend their right to access public dollars, particularly with this government, as a right of access—almost an entitlement.

We, on this side of the House, defend the public. We defend the citizens and their right to transparency of public dollars and their rights and privileges as citizens to have their roads maintained, to have access to a universal health care system and a strong publicly funded education system.

1540

This piece of legislation, Bill 167, asks the government—any government—to make the business case for

contracting out of any public service. We believe the case does not exist, and we have the data and the evidence to prove it. But at the minimum, opening up this information to the broader public is in the public interest. Indeed, they have the right to this information.

Now for a little context, Mr. Speaker: When I was first elected to Queen's Park, in 2012, I entered this Legislature when it was embroiled in the gas plant scandal. A contempt motion had been tabled—eventually, an OPP investigation; charges were laid. A cover-up of a conspiracy was afoot. In fact, the court case is quite topical even today. I mention this because had Bill 167 been in place, it is highly unlikely that the government would have been in a position to agree to compensate TransCanada for lost profits even though it had no legal obligation to do so. You'll remember: At the time, the Liberals pledged that TransCanada would be made whole. In this instance, the private and political interests trumped the public interest. We need to learn from this. The nature of those contracts remains a black mark on this government. The only reason we found out the full costing was because it was a minority government.

Access to information about how this government spends your money should be more transparent, should be more responsible and should make more sense. And every dollar that is spent should have some direct correlation to benefiting the citizens of this province.

Over the years, as privatizing public services becomes the default position of this government, the public becomes less and less aware of how tax dollars are being spent. This does not inspire confidence in our economy, our public service or our democracy.

Let me be clear: New Democrats are not against working with the private sector, but we need to ensure that the public interest always comes first and is always protected.

In 2014, Tom Walkom gave an overview of this government's privatization agenda:

"Ontario's Liberal government has an almost pathological desire to involve the private sector in public business.

"When awarding contracts for new power plants, it has favoured private electricity firms over publicly owned....

"It is anxious to contract out the delivery of public medicare services to private clinics.

"For a while, it even privatized regulation, giving industry groups the authority to charge consumers fees for handling electronic and other kinds of waste.

"In one notorious case, the Liberal government established an arm's-length public agency called Ornge to run the province's air ambulance service. Then, inexplicably, it allowed this agency to set up a web of privately owned, profit-making subsidiaries."

It's completely unacceptable.

Finally, he went on to say that the government "insists that large-scale public construction projects, such as hospitals, be handled by private firms paid from the public purse."

This approach doesn't even create good jobs, Mr. Speaker.

As an aside, with regard to the Eglinton Crosstown transit project, for instance, Clive Thurston, who's the chair of Construction Design Alliance Ontario and the president of the Ontario General Contractors Association, criticizes the bundling of P3 projects by stating: "Simply put, bundling the station and maintenance facility construction into one contract has hamstrung the tendering process, limited competition, stifled innovation, and isolated the small and medium-sized construction and design firms." So this is actually hurting the economy.

On the side of public service and contracting out, I don't have enough time to go through all of the scandals, but the body of evidence is growing with each passing year, and it needs to stop.

While some may say Bill 167 is onerous, by doing the due diligence you'll actually be saving money down the line. This is a scandal-saving piece of legislation, and the government should be very interested in it.

Just to review some of the contracting out and the privatization: We had the chemotherapy drug debacle between February 2012 and March 2013, when 1,200 patients at four hospitals in Ontario received watered-down chemotherapy drugs.

We had the SAMS scandal, when this government introduced a new system for social assistance. It was expected to cost \$242 million, and yet a year afterwards it was \$50 million more, and \$20 million in social assistance had been mistakenly overpaid, and some welfare recipients didn't receive their intended payments. This system means it takes longer for people to qualify for social assistance, and low-income Ontarians are worse off than before. Outsourcing IT is not cheaper, it's not more efficient, and it often hurts the people whom we're supposed to be serving.

The child abuse prevention database: This is a heart-breaking issue. CPIN is supposed to be, one day, a unified database connecting all children's aid societies. This came out of the Jeffrey Baldwin inquest. It was supposed to be in place in February 2016; it will not be in place until 2019. Why is this acceptable, Mr. Speaker?

The CCACs: The Auditor General found that 39% of the funding that went to CCACs was being contracted out and was going to profit, administration and bureaucracy.

Road maintenance: While the government saved millions of dollars on road maintenance, the AG found that, in 2015, it was taking twice as long to clear highways to bare pavement, and people are being hurt. If Bill 167 had been in place, for instance, road maintenance contracts would not have been awarded to companies that didn't even have the equipment to complete the work, that didn't do the work because it affected their profit margins, that were then fined for not performing the work. And they wouldn't have to explain why they haven't even bothered to collect the \$33 million in fines. It does amaze me, Mr. Speaker, that this government can't collect MTO fines that they levied, but they can claw back social assistance from the poorest families in the province of Ontario.



Finally, if this government was bound by Bill 167, they would have had to make the business case to sell off Hydro One, and that does not exist. It does not. This government, under the leadership of Ed Clark, has refused to share the economic analysis with the Financial Accountability Officer. This option would not have been open to the Premier and the Minister of Finance to sell off Hydro One. It is not in the interest of the people of this province. The people of this province know it, and moving ahead will only hurt them. Bill 167 would stop that.

The sell-off of Hydro One is a breach of trust.

I urge all parties to support this step forward for accountability and greater transparency in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I'm delighted to stand up today and speak to Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations and Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, 2016 and to amend the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

When I was listening to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo speak, what I noticed was that she spent so much time on a negative rant, she ran out of time to actually speak to—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

The Minister of Children and Youth Services and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, if you wish to carry on a debate and are not the speaker, I would ask you to go outside. If you're going to stay here, you're going to remain quiet.

Start the clock.

Continue.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** As I was saying, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was so busy on a negative rant that she ran out of time to actually speak to what her bill might do. I'm going to do what she ought to have done and actually speak to the bill.

The wordy title of this bill hints at the redundancy of the bill—redundancy, Mr. Speaker, because much of what the bill sets out to do is already being done. The bill reminds me of a person who rushes out of their home and runs to a grocery store to buy a carton of milk, only to come home and open the fridge to realize that there's plenty of milk in the fridge. If only the person had checked the fridge before rushing out to the grocery store to buy more milk, she would have known there was plenty of milk in the fridge and would have saved herself a trip to the grocery store and some money. In the same way, if only the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo had checked to see what the government is already doing, she would have realized that much of what she's proposing is already being undertaken.

To be clear, I have no quarrel at all with the over-reaching goal of the bill, which is transparency and accountability. What is at issue is how to achieve the transparency and accountability. What is at issue is the

bill's failure to recognize the strides that this government has already made in ensuring transparency and accountability across government, but especially around public-private partnerships.

The bill sets out to—and I quote from the proposed bill: “The preliminary analysis”—

*Interjections.*

1550

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

The minister responsible for infrastructure, the Minister of Agriculture, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the member for Timmins–James Bay—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I could stand here all afternoon. I have no place to go tonight.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. The member in your own party had a chance to speak and the House was very quiet.

I would ask all of you to give the speaker a chance so that I can hear what's going on. From now on, you'll get warnings and you'll probably be named.

Start the clock.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I quote from her bill: “The preliminary analysis must include an analysis of the viability, the expected risks, costs and benefits of using a private sector entity....” It's a great idea, Mr. Speaker. There's just one problem: We're already doing it. Infrastructure Ontario already makes bids value-for-money methodology, and project information publicly available on their website.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you another example of the redundancy of this bill. The bill proposes, “The Financial Accountability Officer must then conduct a review of the preliminary analysis and must provide at least 60 days for comments from the public....” Again, it's a great idea. The only problem is we're already doing it. The Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General already have the power to look into any project the government undertakes.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you yet another example of the redundancy in the proposed bill. Again, I quote from the bill: “The public sector entity must, if it still chooses to continue with the privatization, submit the final report and contract summary to the Auditor General for review and comment.” Again, it's a great idea. The only problem is we're already doing it. Each P3 project that IO undertakes already undergoes rigorous analysis, including third-party consultants, to ensure it is appropriate for the AFP model.

I could go on, but in the interest of time I'm going to stop with these examples. Mr. Speaker, you see a trend here: It's a well-intentioned bill, but it's proposing initiatives that the government is already doing. Now I know that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo will argue that the government isn't doing things exactly as the bill proposes. I know she's going to argue we are not doing it exactly her way, but there is reason—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Durham, if you're going to speak, you're on the microphone. Would you please stay quiet?

The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, you're warned.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point I was making was, there is a reason we don't do it the way her bill is proposing. It really speaks to the idea that we must not under-regulate, but at the same time we must not over-regulate. We believe we've got the balance right and we've got the evidence. The evidence is, the Auditor General herself agrees that Infrastructure Ontario has delivered 98% of the projects on time and either under budget or on budget. The fact is, Infrastructure Ontario is the best in its class in the world today. It really speaks to the fact that we got that regulation and that balance right.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, all I wanted to reiterate is, I really do support the member opposite's intention and the principle behind the bill, but I do believe that if she had only checked to see what the government is already doing, we wouldn't have to debate this bill today. My advice to her is, the next time she's going out to buy some milk perhaps she can check the fridge first.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I am privileged to stand and talk to the Transparency and Accountability in Government Contracting Act, as put forth by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

It is interesting to me how squeamish the government gets when they hear the words “transparency” and “accountability.” It's something that this side has certainly mentioned for as long as I've been in this place—how secretive they can be on some of these things.

We believe more oversight is needed in this area. We appreciate the concept of involving the auditor and the Financial Accountability Officer in the review and oversight process when it comes to procurement. We believe that this deserves further consideration.

I want to relate something from my riding that I think will prove this point.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

Thank you very much. Start the clock.

Continue.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker.

Accountability and transparency—what a novel idea; it really is. When I got involved in politics, one of the reasons was certainly what these two words meant.

I want to relate to you a story from my riding concerning accountability and transparency. I believe that, certainly, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo has really put some points forward that will back this up.

Sir, you might remember when the Green Energy Act was enacted in Ontario, and the devastating effects it had on rural Ontario. I remember the Premier at the time saying that he wasn't going to stand for NIMBYism. The

reason he did that is because he knew there was going to be pushback, especially with the wind turbines. So he took the planning rights away from municipalities concerning these things. That's something that we didn't know. I was a councillor at that time, and when I found out about it, it certainly was something that surprised us at that time.

We then found out that one of the reasons that this was done was because there were contracts signed at exorbitant prices for electricity. We found these things out later.

I would suggest that this government take notice of the two words “accountability” and “transparency” in anything that they are doing. I want to commend the member for putting that in this act, because it's something that this government has an issue with at times.

We have concerns that this could become a very onerous process to procure major infrastructure projects. It could add months, if not years, to the timeline to get needed infrastructure built. We do not want to keep the shovels from going into the ground and slow what little progress is being made in Ontario.

This act would also appear to force companies chosen by the government to provide public services to disclose financial and other information. It is unclear whether that would even be legal, and we certainly would recommend that further clarification on this would be brought forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm proud to rise to speak to Bill 167, a bill brought forward by my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo—in favour, obviously, because it does a number of important things to actually bring some transparency to the government's initiatives around contracting out and privatization initiatives, which we know have led to boondoggle after boondoggle in this province, have led to a lack of accessibility of some of the public services that this province provides and a lack of oversight, frankly, in a number of areas.

This bill does a great deal on a number of different fronts. We've already heard from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo around some of the specific boondoggles. We're talking about Ornge air ambulance and a number of the other specifics that she raised, the big one of course being the \$8 billion of overspending that this government undertook in their alternative financing and procurement model of financing infrastructure projects. I don't think a day goes by when the Premier of this province doesn't stand in her place and talk about all of the investments the Liberals are making on infrastructure and all of the plans that the Liberals have to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on infrastructure. And yet what they're not telling the public is the fact that they've wasted billions of dollars on infrastructure. What we should be getting is a tally of how many subways we could have built if the priority of the Liberals hadn't been making sure they were feathering the nests of their friends and of the well-connected on Bay Street instead of making sure that every single public dollar goes to the benefit of the general public in the province of Ontario.



1600

However, there are certainly a number of my colleagues who are also going to want to speak to this bill, so I'm not going to take too much time myself, except to say that it is much too important an initiative to continue to ignore. I congratulate the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for actually bringing forward some practical ideas about how to clean up what this government has been doing when it comes to infrastructure and privatization.

I say that because we know that the privatization schemes have gone as badly as the infrastructure schemes and they need to be cleaned up. It's unfortunate because infrastructure is something that actually can do a lot for the province. It certainly creates jobs. It allows us to ensure that we can train the next generation of workers, for example, in terms of the apprenticeship programs for registered apprenticeships and making sure that the tradespeople are able to train their next generation of people to help us to make sure our infrastructure is safe and of the highest quality.

When you're doing things the way that this government is doing them, the way that was described by the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, we don't get those benefits because what happens is we end up in a situation where one hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing, where we have 20 different general contractors on a site, nobody knows who the boss is and everybody is working at cross purposes. That's certainly the feedback that I've gotten in terms of these megaprojects that the government puts out to tender.

There certainly needs to be some work done there, and this bill goes a long way to do that. In fact, one of the things that the president of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Smokey Thomas, who's here with us today, says about this bill is that it lifts the veil on the contracting out and privatization that this government has been undertaking. I think it's absolutely time that that veil is lifted.

There are certainly some of the things more recently around SAMS and the boondoggle on the IT with SAMS and other ones that I'm sure are coming down the pike, but there are more things than that. When you look at what has happened with privatization in this province, we see so many services and so many initiatives that the public used to have provided by a reliable, accountable, transparent public process that are now in the hands of the private sector. I think about things like driver testing, for example. ServiceOntario has gone through I don't know how many iterations. In fact, this government put a bunch of kiosks out there to take the place of real people and then had to dial that back because that was a big mistake as well.

There's no doubt that there needs to be much more scrutiny and much more attention to what this government is doing when it's privatizing our public services because what we end up with is not only mistakes like the ones that happened with the chemotherapy drugs but mistakes that can actually be life-threatening. We've seen

mistakes that occur because people's private information that they trust their government will keep private ends up getting into the hands of people that have no business getting that information. I think the people of Ontario would much rather have their personal and private information in the hands of trusted public workers than they would in some private company who's more interested in profiting off of it than anything else—selling that information, perhaps, to some of their other colleagues in the private sector.

There are many instances in the health care sector where we've seen privatization. We've seen labs, for example, in hospitals being sent out to the private sector, and now all of a sudden there's consolidation in those labs and some of them are shutting down. If it was a public service, you could be sure that the government would be responsible and responsive to complaints about shutting down lab services. Now that they're in the private sector, it's all about how the private sector can get more money and more economy of scale for lab services because they're no longer being done in the hospital to the extent that they were, Speaker. Again, the further privatization of hospital services is a serious concern of Ontarians.

When I first became elected, I was serving as a councillor at city council. This was when the Conservative government downloaded all kinds of services to municipalities. I sat in one of my first meetings where the head of that region was pushing a sole-source contract for paramedics in my community, and if it wasn't for me realizing that this is not only a sole-source contract but a contracting out of public services, that's quite possibly something that could have happened in Hamilton. That's not acceptable and certainly not what Hamiltonians would have wanted to see.

Of course, the biggest privatization that's facing the people of Ontario these days is the privatization of Hydro One.

I haven't done the math yet, I haven't done the tallying yet—I shouldn't call it "math"—but I have to say that I'm pretty concerned that, just looking at the budget numbers that we've seen year over year the last number of years, we are seeing a significant erosion of the quality and the accountability of the services provided to the people of Ontario because the Premier of Ontario has actually implemented the promises from the Conservatives' playbook in the last election. So I don't know if it's 100,000 jobs yet, but I expect it's getting pretty close.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 167, the Transparency and Accountability in Government Contracting Act. I know the member from Kitchener–Waterloo—this is an area she's very interested in. I'm happy to see that she's coming around to supporting the P3 model, and she has some interesting ideas on how to improve on it.

I'm very pleased to stand and reaffirm our government's commitment to transparency and accountability,

and debate how to best deliver important infrastructure projects in Ontario.

Public-private partnerships are a world-renowned and accepted best practice for delivering important infrastructure projects. Since the early 2000s, our government has judiciously used the P3 or alternative financing procurement model. In doing so, our government has saved Ontarians \$6.6 billion over the course of 74 projects and established Ontario as a world leader for alternative financing. The world comes to Ontario to see how we are doing it right.

I'm glad that the member opposite has taken this interest in our infrastructure procurement process and, like the member opposite, I recognize that Ontario gets the best results from the AFP model when our infrastructure procurement process is transparent and public and private sector partners are held accountable. However, I'd like to also point out that most of the suggestions in this bill have already been implemented and contributed to Ontario's impressive track record.

Infrastructure Ontario already makes bid, value-for-money methodology and project information publicly available on their website. Each P3 project that IO undertakes also undergoes rigorous analysis, including third-party consultants, to ensure it is appropriate for the AFP model—and not every project is recommended for an AFP model. Furthermore, the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General both have the power to look into any project the government undertakes.

Nevertheless, I believe Bill 167 may still contain some valuable contributions. I'm happy to support legislation that has the potential to improve transparency and accountability, and I look forward to hearing more from other colleagues who are debating this matter.

Just as a personal experience that I've had overseeing how large-scale procurements for major infrastructure projects are done—I note that the leader of the third party mused as to how many more subways could have been built if we had not used P3. Well, Mr. Speaker, as a commissioner of the Toronto Transit Commission, I fought for the TTC to undertake a proper P3 process for the York-University-Spadina extension. The commission chose not to and now we see massive cost overruns and multi-year delays on that project. The chair of the TTC at that time was, I believe, the one-time president of the NDP. He was very opposed to a P3 model. Now we're paying hundreds of millions of dollars more, and commuters in northwestern Toronto and Vaughan aren't able to use the subway, which should have already been opened. That is a real example in our province today where a P3 could have delivered better results.

1610

Mr. Speaker, these very large infrastructure projects entail great risk, and when this —

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** You don't have to put 30% down when you mitigate risk.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The leader of the third party, would you come to order?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** Mr. Speaker, it's only when this risk is properly assessed, when the rigors of the fiscal discipline of a private sector company that knows they are taking on this risk—when you do that, then you can deliver projects on budget and on time. The traditional model, with public agencies doing this, was open-ended. There wasn't the same accountability; there wasn't the same rigor. The taps were simply open.

I'm very proud to be a part of a government that has become a world leader in these procurement projects.

I believe the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care mentioned the figure that some 98% of IO projects that were done with the P3 model were delivered on time and on or under budget. That is what delivers more value for Ontarians. That is what builds more infrastructure for Ontarians. That is what guarantees that we can actually make those crucial investments that will help promote prosperity, create more jobs in this province and provide the key infrastructure that we all need to do our work, to get home, and to do the various activities we undertake.

Many of the points in this bill are good, but many of them have already been implemented by our government. But I'm very happy to see that the member from Kitchener-Waterloo is now more supportive of the P3 process.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm pleased to participate in this afternoon's debate of the Transparency and Accountability in Government Contracting Act, particularly as my party's critic for training, colleges and universities. It's within that context that I'd like to address schedule 2 in the draft legislation, dealing with the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

It appears that it has just been lumped into the proposed legislation. It looks like an afterthought. It was disconnected almost entirely from the discussion that rightfully ensues around the substantive matter of procurement of major infrastructure projects that are reflected in the legislation.

I'm uncertain, without a much more comprehensive analysis, exactly how the proposed amendment in schedule 2 would impact colleges in this province, defined in the legislation that underpins the colleges of applied arts and technologies established under the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002. But I'm certain that this proposed amendment deserves discussion and debate on its own merit.

Clearly, the issue, as I see it, is that if we're here to have a fulsome discussion on the merits of an amendment to the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, then let's extract it from the bill being discussed today and deal with it on its own merits.

I look forward to subsequent discussion with the member for Kitchener-Waterloo on that aspect. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?



**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to rise in support of my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and, frankly, a bill that needed to be introduced and a bill that needs to be passed in this Legislature.

My time is limited. I want to pick out one example of a privatization scheme that illustrates everything that can go wrong. In the course of the gas plant scandal, I had the opportunity to look at the Oakville plant being put forward by Eastern Power.

Speaker, as you're well aware, that plant was being financed at interest costing 14% per year. I think the best phrase in response to this was that of former finance minister for the Liberals Dwight Duncan, who said, "Who knew that they would go to Short-Neck Louie down at the corner to get a loan?" I thought, "Yes, Dwight, for once, you nailed it. We disagreed on everything else, but you nailed it there."

Speaker, privatization means movement to financing on very disadvantageous terms and much higher rates for the public. Time after time, we've seen it; I think it's proven.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations and Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, 2016 and to amend the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

Speaker, it sounds more like an omnibus bill. It's the first I've seen in private members' legislation.

I commend the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for her concern over the lack of oversight by this Liberal government, as it has cost the people of Ontario billions of dollars for projects overseen by this government. Projects such as the Canada-US bridge in Windsor; the Nipigon River Bridge, the Pan Am Games, and the Union-Pearson Express train are just a few of the recent construction scandals that have cost Ontarians so dearly. I'm sure—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** There are about 10 conversations on my right, and I cannot hear the speaker. I would ask those who have carried on a conversation if you would take it outside, so that at least I can hear the speaker.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We talk about these scandals, and I'm sure they've contributed to the cuts in education and in health care that we have seen by this government.

Speaker, while we applaud the scrutiny over this Liberal government, we are concerned with the impact that this huge amount of red tape and regulation will have on the ability of government, and future governments, to procure well-designed, well-thought-out and well-built capital projects.

We are happy to see the NDP member acknowledge the importance of private-public partnerships by trying to correct some of the problems that this Liberal govern-

ment is having with the procurement, quality control and the management of cost-effective, practical, large infrastructure projects.

I might suggest that it has nothing to do with the private-public partnerships, or P3s, but more to do with the ability of this government to effectively manage the procurement of any large project. Ornge, eHealth and the gas plants cancellation scandals are just a few more examples of this government not being able to manage a project. We all suffer from their mistakes, their mismanagement and the lack of transparency on these projects.

While we agree with the intent of much of this bill, we need to see significant amendments to ensure that the government of Ontario can achieve the most cost-effective infrastructure that Ontarians need and deserve. Without these amendments, this bill has the possibility of tying up projects for years, adding significant administration costs and unnecessary delays.

Contrary to what this Liberal government and the NDP believe, there is not an unlimited amount of taxes that can be collected from the people of Ontario, nor is there an unlimited source of debt that can be undertaken by this province. As we saw again in this year's Liberal budget, important services are being crowded out by the increasing interest on the excessive debt that they have undertaken.

We agree with the intent of this bill to increase accountability and transparency on this government, and are looking forward to working at committee with the third party to rein in this government and give the people of Ontario the infrastructure they need.

The practice that we've seen in this government of going out to Liberal-friendly companies, and the lack of oversight, is costing us dearly. Transparency is something that everybody in this province believes in and wants.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 167, and I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for bringing this forward.

**1620**

I was listening to the comments by the member for Whitby–Oshawa, who questioned why schedule 2 is included in this bill. Speaker, we have seen, in the college sector in this province, a very dramatic shift toward the privatization of educational programming and the contracting out of educational services. We just have to look at what happened with Algonquin and Niagara setting up campuses in Saudi Arabia. We know that Algonquin College lost almost \$1.5 million of public money in just one year by setting up that Saudi campus. This was an arrangement that was supposed to generate profits of over \$20 million in five years. It is nowhere on track to do that. Those are public dollars that are being used to support a private partnership. We also saw Niagara College lose almost \$1 million on its Saudi campus.

Now, the government, thankfully, has seen the error of its ways and announced that those men-only campuses will be reversed. But we need some legislative protections to ensure that public dollars aren't squandered that way again.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The deputy House leader, come to order.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** We've also seen Ontario colleges entering into partnership agreements with private career colleges to deliver programming. Again, we're seeing public dollars used to subsidize private profit. There is a public interest in ensuring that public dollars support publicly funded education; that they support the high quality of education that is delivered by Ontario college faculty and staff. That is why the successor rights that are guaranteed in schedule 2 of this bill are so important.

The successor rights allow the bargaining unit to continue to represent employees when there is a sale or transfer or other kind of divestment of services to another kind of entity, so that employees who are working in those other entities are part of the public sector and are mandated to provide the high-quality services that we know Ontario college faculty and staff already provide. Currently, there are only successor rights in the case of a merger or amalgamation, so the amendment that is proposed in schedule 2 is very important.

Speaker, we want to ensure that public dollars are protected and that there is proper oversight over public spending. This bill is critical to enable the government to do that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

The member for Kitchener-Waterloo, you have two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It was an interesting debate, I have to say.

I just want to say to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care—she told me to check the fridge before I went out to buy some milk. No one is going to be able to keep milk in their fridge because the privatization of the electricity and energy market in this province has gone right through the roof.

I'll leave you with a stat around accountability—this is from the Globe and Mail: the "Auditor General announced that, between 2006 and 2014, thanks to incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the province's Liberal government, Ontarians overpaid for electricity to the tune of \$37 billion."

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "And over the next 18 years, consumers will be overpaying ... another \$133 billion."

If you think we don't need greater accountability and transparency in the finances of this province, and if you actually say to us, "Just trust us," that ship has sailed. That ship has sunk.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Quite honestly, if any P3 project had to go through open and transparent scrutiny to determine its business value, it would fail, because no business in the province of Ontario, if they value their business, is going to go out and borrow money at 28% when they can borrow it at 3%.

Right now, that entire process is flawed. All you have wanted to do is separate yourself from the responsibility of infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, I just—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, you're warned. The Minister of Infrastructure, I asked you to come to order.

Start the clock.

Carry on.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** P3s, in a common-sense world, would not pass this test.

I want to leave you with this one quote, and I share this sentiment from Mr. Kinnear. He says, "I fear that public trust in government will be so eroded by the time our grandchildren are grown up that nobody will remember a time when the trains actually ran on time—a time, already past, when government had the courage to invest directly in building a better future for all Ontarians."

Support this bill and truly build Ontario up.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs withdraw that statement?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** Withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

## RARE DISEASES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 18, standing in the name of Mr. Harris.

Mr. Harris has moved private member's notice of motion number 63. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We'll take the vote at the end.

## LICENSED HOME INSPECTORS ACT,

2016

## LOI DE 2016

## SUR LES INSPECTEURS D'HABITATIONS TITULAIRES D'UN PERMIS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Dong has moved second reading of Bill 165, An Act to regulate home inspectors.



Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Fife has moved second reading of Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Oh, sorry. My apologies. Pursuant to standing order 98(g), the bill from Mr. Dong has to be referred to committee.

The member for Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Regulations and private bills.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that it go to regulations and private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Ten thousand dollars a plate; wow.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Deputy House leader, you're not making my life easy.

# TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING ACT, 2016

## LOI DE 2016 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION EN MATIÈRE DE MARCHÉS PUBLICS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Fife has moved second reading of Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations and Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, 2016 and to amend the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a bunch of noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll take the vote. Call in the members. It'll be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1629 to 1634.*

# RARE DISEASES

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Harris has moved private members' notice of motion number 63.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

## Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	French, Jennifer K.	Pettapiece, Randy
Arnott, Ted	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
DiNovo, Cheri	McDonnell, Jim	Vanhof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Paul	Walker, Bill

Fife, Catherine  
Forster, Cindy

Munro, Julia  
Nicholls, Rick

Yakabuski, John  
Yurek, Jeff

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

## Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dong, Han	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Fraser, John	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Vernile, Daiene
Del Duca, Steven	Martins, Cristina	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	McGarry, Kathryn	
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 33; the nays are 40.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Please open the door for 30 seconds.

# TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING ACT, 2016

## LOI DE 2016 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILISATION EN MATIÈRE DE MARCHÉS PUBLICS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Fife has moved second reading of Bill 167, An Act to enact the Privatizations and Public-Private Partnerships Transparency and Accountability Act, 2016 and to amend the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

## Ayes

Albanese, Laura	French, Jennifer K.	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Nicholls, Rick
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Potts, Arthur
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Qaadri, Shafiq
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Rinaldi, Lou
Barrett, Toby	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Bradley, James J.	Malhi, Harinder	Singh, Jagmeet
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Clark, Steve	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	Martow, Gila	Taylor, Monique
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dickson, Joe	McDonnell, Jim	Vanhof, John
DiNovo, Cheri	McGarry, Kathryn	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	McMeekin, Ted	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Forster, Cindy	Moridi, Reza	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	Munro, Julia	Zimmer, David

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 0.

1640

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member for Kitchener–Waterloo?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** There's nothing right now at finance. We can get to this right away: the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** On February 26, 2016, Mr. McNaughton moved the adoption of the recommendations contained in the report of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly on e-petitions.

Pursuant to the order of the House of earlier today, I'm now required to put the question. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'm in the middle of a vote.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, part of what the committee on the Legislative Assembly spoke about was the fact that the Clerk would come back to the committee on the e-petition issue and bring back some costing. So I was just trying to get some clarity whether the spirit of the discussion at the committee was going to be acted upon at a later date.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would assume so, but I don't know because—the bill is now carried, and I guess the next phase would be what was in that report.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** On the member's point of order, the report has been adopted, and whatever are the recommendations in that report, that's what will carry forward.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** On the same point of order, there was a substantive discussion about costs for the system, and the Legislative Assembly committee still is—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** —and that's what will happen.

Orders of the day?

### CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

### LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 2, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker—  
*Applause.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Oh, Speaker, late on a Thursday, unusual things happen.

Speaker, as you are well aware, the NDP supports cap-and-trade, and we want a cap-and-trade system in Ontario that works. It's something that the NDP, federally and provincially, has campaigned on in the past and continues to campaign on. We want a system that is fair, that is effective and that is transparent.

I have to say that the bill before us—and the cap-and-trade system described in the bill before us—falls short of those standards, and it needs substantial improvement. It needs to be improved because without changes, it will damage the credibility of climate action in Ontario and won't give the changes that are needed to actually come to grips with climate change.

The government of the past has needlessly undermined public support for environmental initiatives, because it failed to heed warnings and listen to expert advice. Climate change, Speaker, is too important. We can't afford to make mistakes when we're dealing with this issue. The government needs to get this right. It needs to listen to various voices in this Legislature and across this province, so that whatever bill finally comes before us for a vote is one that will actually be effective, will be fair, will be transparent.

The Ontario NDP wants to make sure that the cap-and-trade system doesn't disproportionately burden low-income Ontarians, or Ontarians with little control over their emissions. Northern Ontarians, people living in remote communities, people who lack access to transit or clean energy: Those people should not bear a disproportionate share of what it will take to make a change. The government needs to help these people reduce their carbon footprints and to save money. It also needs to help them financially get through the transition to a carbon-free future.



In British Columbia and soon in Alberta, low-income families get a rebate to help offset the cost of carbon. In California, there's a law requiring that a certain percentage of cap-and-trade revenues be spent on programs that benefit disadvantaged communities.

Speaker, those are very positive steps taken by California and taken by British Columbia. Unfortunately, no such measures exist in this bill. I say to the Liberals in this chamber that they have a working majority. They can amend this bill and make it address the issues that are addressed substantively in other jurisdictions, without undermining the efforts necessary to come to grips with climate change, and at the same time building the political support that will allow this program to last more than two years.

I have to say that I have followed climate politics globally. I watched, with interest and despair, what happened in Australia when the carbon pricing system in Australia was used as a bludgeon against the Australian Labor Party—their coalition with the Greens. It was used by the Liberal and the National Party as a bludgeon, to roll back those changes and undermine climate action on that continent.

The Quebec government announced its climate change action plan to much fanfare 10 years ago. However, a 2013 report found that Quebec had only cut their greenhouse gas emissions by about 10% of their original goal.

The Ontario government is promising even greater reductions than Quebec had put on the table, with fewer tools. This government needs to learn from the mistakes made in Quebec, and they need to know that we and Ontarians across this province want to see real results, a real reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. They don't just want messaging. They don't simply want a wonderful-sounding bill or a wonderful-sounding plan. They want to see this risk, this looming crisis shunted aside. They want to see this province protected.

1650

This government has recently announced \$325 million worth of programs to be funded from cap-and-trade revenues, but there are no greenhouse gas reduction targets connected to any of the programs that were announced. Although some good work is featured, and that needs to be acknowledged, the investment in co-op and non-profit housing for energy conservation retrofits—badly needed and wisely invested in, but at the same time, greenhouse gas reduction targets weren't tied to those investments. That's critical in terms of determining whether, in the end, the investments were effective, and for the public to know whether or not these investments are ones that are going to make a difference in our lives.

We in the NDP want to see greenhouse gas reduction programs that have real impact. We don't simply want a slush fund established by this bill, which will not provide targeted, verifiable, effective change.

The government's so-called greenhouse gas reduction account is not a special-purpose account. It is an accounting fiction that gives the government total flexibility in how it spends the cap-and-trade revenues.

Because this bill is of great importance, I've actually gone door to door in my riding, doing a canvas poll, stopping at doors, outlining what's in the bill and asking people's opinions. I have to say there's a lot of support for climate action but a great deal of concern about how the money will be spent and whether it will be spent transparently. I would say there are two great Achilles heels for the government with this bill, and one is ensuring that the money is spent and seen to be spent on the goals that have been outlined, and the other is fairness. If those two pieces are missing, this bill, this system that is put in place, will be vulnerable to being rolled back and thrown out in the future. That would be a loss.

The NDP wants the money to flow to a separate account that is separately and transparently audited and directly connected to targeted, measurable and independently verifiable greenhouse gas reductions.

One other feature: This act allows the cap-and-trade system and its administration to be delegated to an unaccountable private corporation that is not subject to public oversight. We've had issues in this province with delegated authorities in the past. The TSSA, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority: That authority did not and has not responded to the public. It has been a problem for the people of Ontario, as well as for the government of Ontario. That approach does not cut it in terms of making this bill useful.

Speaker, I appreciate the chance to speak to the bill. I recognize that we're talking very high stakes here—high stakes environmentally, politically and economically.

The environmental stakes: A failure to take effective action means that we will not be able to curb rising global temperatures, and a failure to act means much higher food prices for us here in Canada and, in many parts of the world, a lack of food. It means a world of unstable and extreme weather that will put people's lives and property at risk. Those are very high stakes.

There are political stakes. No matter what option any government picks for action on climate change, there will be a battle because we're changing the way society is structured. We're changing who is getting wealthy off that society and who is not. So when you make a choice, when a Legislature makes a decision as to what policy direction it should take, it needs to find options that will unify as many people as possible, rather than dividing as much as possible. It has to put forward an approach that secures the greatest possible buy-in. For that reason alone, it's critical that fairness be incorporated into this bill, because without fairness, you won't get the buy-in. It's as simple as that.

Lastly, the economic stakes that are tied to the previous two: Climate change will disrupt our economy. It was interesting to me, reading an article today about an extension of the Yonge subway up into Newmarket. One of the options for dealing with commuters from north of the city is to use rail lines coming in, but unfortunately, because of more extreme weather events, those rail lines are now vulnerable to flooding. So, Speaker, we will see, in this society, more and more constraint on our econom-

ic activities, and more and more constraint on our economic possibilities, if we are not able to bring climate change under control.

Again, in order to get it right, this bill will have to be fair, it will have to be transparent and it will have to be effective. In order to get it right, this bill will have to be part of a larger climate change program that will be fair, transparent and effective, because I believe that pricing carbon is a part of a larger plan, and it cannot be the whole plan. If it is, then that is too small a set of tools to actually accomplish the purpose.

This bill has to be understood in the context of the state of the climate today and what will be coming at us tomorrow. The world, Speaker, is heating up and changing faster than we projected even five years ago. Arctic sea ice, which plays a major role in shaping our climate—some climatologists refer to it as “the world’s thermostat”—is melting at a much faster rate than all of the climate models around the world had ever predicted. As you disrupt that thermostat, you disrupt local weather everywhere. The past two winters we went through were extremely cold here in Ontario. But in Alaska, they were quite warm. As the polar ice cap melts, the rhythm of the seasons is changed, and the potential for disruption becomes far greater.

Yet, Speaker, world action on climate change has been completely inadequate. In 2013, Kevin Anderson, who’s the deputy director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Manchester in the UK, sent a letter about our global failures to the office of the president of the European Commission. Now, I had an opportunity at the Paris climate summit to listen to Mr. Anderson. He’s a well-recognized climatologist—a bright guy; tough thinker; good with math. He wrote about the European Union’s 2030 climate targets. He wrote:

“Global emissions today are 60% higher than at the time of the first IPCC report in 1990, and in the six years since the last IPCC report ... a further 200 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> have been released into the atmosphere. As a result, in 2013 the scale of mitigation”—the scale of action that has to be taken to cut greenhouse gas emissions—“required is now an order of magnitude more challenging than it was in 1990.”

Speaker, if it was hard in 1990, it’s 10 times harder now, because 20 years have just passed without the action that was necessary. You don’t see a 60% increase in global carbon dioxide levels without a recognition that what’s been done to date has been a failure. He notes that the European Union “must acknowledge this reality if it is ever to catalyze meaningful action on climate change.”

We too, Speaker, in this Legislative Assembly, have to recognize that reality: that there have been more than two lost decades on this; and that with this bill, we have to have an approach that will actually deliver, and deliver in a way that people in Ontario can buy into, and deliver in a way that actually will make meaningful change.

1700

Increasingly, scientists are talking about the possibility of abrupt climate change. If you talked to scientists 15

years ago, they would have talked about changes happening over a horizon of a century or a century and a half—largely smooth, incremental changes. Those would have been hard enough to adapt to, even at a slow but steady rate of change. Increasingly, it’s being put forward that we are looking at a situation of abrupt climate change, where we would be looking at jagged changes in the world environment that would push many people and many societies to the breaking point.

I just note that in the United States, NASA follows this issue, has a website and publishes current scientific information. They note that the earth is currently projected to warm between 2 and 6 degrees Celsius in the next century. That’s a lot, Speaker. According to them, when global warming has happened at various times in the past two million years, it has taken the planet about 5,000 years to warm 5 degrees—about a thousandth of a degree per year. The predicted rate of warming for the next century is at least 20 times faster.

In the past century alone, temperatures climbed 0.7 degrees Celsius, roughly 10 times faster than the average rate of Ice Age recovery warming. That means we are exposed to a whole range of risks that have never been seen before. We are entering a whole unknown territory of risks and changes, and we can’t fully know the scale of risk that we’re facing.

Speaker, I like to hike in winter. When it’s a good minus 25 or minus 30, I can walk out on a frozen lake and know that I’m safe—a beautiful place to walk. But if you do that in late winter when the ice has begun to melt, even though it’s covered with snow and looks beautiful, you can’t tell where that ice is particularly thin. Speaker, we are in a similar situation. We are walking on ice that increasingly is finding thin patches worn into that surface. We don’t know when things will change abruptly, but we have a very good chance that they will. This is literally true.

Tyler Hamilton wrote in the Toronto Star the other day about Deer Lake, in northern Ontario. It’s a First Nation community that depends on ice roads for goods to get into that community. It has depended on those roads for decades.

He writes: “Historically, those roads could be relied on for 70 to 80 days during winter months. But shorter and warmer winters have significantly narrowed that window, sometimes to fewer than 30 days.

“No community is more aware of the risks than Deer Lake ... former deputy chief Henry Meekis drowned in late 2012 after the ice-road grooming machine he was driving plunged through the ice.”

My guess, Speaker, is that he had gone and groomed those ice roads for many years before that, on the assumption that the ice was frozen solid and he would be safe.

I have to say that the scale of economic risk is one that has not often been addressed. In 2006, the British government commissioned a study. It’s called the Stern Review, after its author, Lord Stern, who commented on the scale of risk. At that time, he wasn’t talking about



how quickly things could come on; he was talking about the level of disruption we faced.

He wrote, "If no action is taken to reduce emissions, the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere could reach double its pre-industrial level as early as 2035, virtually committing us to a global average temperature rise of over 2 degrees Celsius."

Speaker, it is generally acknowledged globally—and it may be optimistic—that a 2-degree centigrade rise is the maximum the world could sustain without dramatic disruption.

"Our actions," he wrote, "over the coming few decades could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity, later in this century and in the next, on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the 20th century."

Which person in this House would not see it as critical to avoid a disruption like the Great Depression? Which person in this House, in this Legislature, would not think it important to avoid years as catastrophic as those of World War II?

He noted as well the "emerging evidence of risks that higher temperatures will trigger massive system 'surprises,' such as the melting and collapse of ice sheets and sudden shifts in regional weather patterns like the monsoons. Thus there is a danger that feedbacks could generate abrupt and large-scale changes in the climate and still further losses."

Speaker, real solutions to climate change are deeply connected to income inequality. Right now, for the last few decades, the vast majority of people have seen their income stagnate or drop. It means they are pushed hard. They don't want to see a further drop in their standard of living. And when you push them, Speaker, they will push back. I raise this because any plan that is brought forward to take on climate change has got to be one that addresses fairness and income inequality at the same time. Without that, it will not stand the test of time. It will not get the buy-in that's required.

We've been through this debate before. I was here in 2009, when the last cap-and-trade bill was introduced. I would say that those who were here for that debate should be forgiven for any level of cynicism they might feel about the intentions of the Liberal government when it comes to action.

I'll quote the Minister of the Environment at the time, Mr. John Gerretsen. On September 14, 2009, he said that "we are truly dealing with a phenomenon, with a situation, that absolutely has to be dealt with, and we as a government are doing something about it within the province of Ontario." It was only seven years ago.

"We all know that it will take bold action and a range of strong concerted efforts from every level of government—federal and provincial, in North America, Europe and elsewhere around the world, and across every sector of society—to tackle this challenge."

He went on to say, "That's why our government has made tackling climate change our most critical environ-

mental property." I think he meant "priority," but anyway: "It is, for example, why we introduced our climate change action plan in 2007, with bold, ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets in line with some of the leading jurisdictions in North America."

That climate plan sank without a trace. It left no imprint on the world. The recession, and the closure of coal—something that was started long before that climate plan, something supported by all parties in this Legislature—that plan had virtually no impact. The recession and the closure of coal plants gave us what reductions we've had, and as there has been some recovery from the recession, the lack of a real climate program has meant our emissions have continued to climb. Using a recession as a climate change strategy is a bad plan. It's just a bad plan.

That's the background, Speaker. That's what has been said and done in the past. That's the scale of the risk and crisis that we're facing. Now I want to talk to the bill itself.

The NDP has stressed three main principles for the upcoming cap-and-trade system: that it be effective, that it be fair and that it be transparent. So let's apply these principles to assessing the bill itself.

Talking about effectiveness: We need to have measures that will actually, in a verifiable way, cut greenhouse gas emissions, and we have to have targets that will get us where we want to go to. We have to have accountability.

First, I want to talk about the targets that are set out in the bill. These targets are not as ambitious as the European Union targets, which one can find easily with a quick Google search. Their target is a 20% reduction in 2020, a 40% reduction in 2030 and an 80% reduction in 2050—2050, Speaker. Very few of us will be around for that date. Maybe the pages that are sitting up with you at the front, but most of the rest of the people sitting in this Legislature won't be around for that date.

1710

I have to note that the targets set by the European Union reflect the fact that there is differing ability on the part of different nation states to actually take action. Some have natural resources that give them an opportunity to act more quickly. Some are wealthier; some are less wealthy. So this is the target for the European Union as a whole. The United Kingdom—their government has a climate act that takes those EU targets, sets them as the baseline and then sets deeper targets, reflecting the fact that the UK is much more well off than a country like Poland. It's simply the reality.

In the UK, they've set up a climate change committee by statute that advises the government. It works with the government on doing their carbon budgets, and they reported that in the UK, "emissions were 35% below 1990 levels in 2014 and the first carbon budget has been met." Note—to my colleagues—that Ontario's target was 6% below 1990 levels in 2014 and was only met because of the recession.

The UK has much more aggressive targets. Their target for 2025 is a 50% reduction compared to 1990

levels—much more aggressive. Even then, I'm not saying that the UK is a climate change utopia; I'm just saying that on the face of it, they are looking at the problem and realizing that they have to be far more aggressive than is being proposed in this bill.

We need more aggressive climate change targets. We need better climate change programs because, as I said earlier, we have had two lost decades.

Cap-and-trade is not enough to meet the targets that we need to set. It's not enough to meet the targets that have already been set. In the UK, there's a recognition that the cap-and-trade program is only part of what has to be done by society as a whole to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. In their most recent plan, 60% of their reductions come from activities outside cap-and-trade—the European Union emissions trading system—and 40% come from the cap-and-trade sector.

In California, 15% of California's greenhouse gas reductions come from their cap-and-trade program. In Ontario, the way we've seen planned so far, it looks like 100%. What it appears to me is that this government really has abandoned this since 2007, finds itself way behind and is opening the door to buying large numbers of credits from California to at least say on paper that we've met our targets. That is problematic because we need to invest here in Ontario. We need to invest financially. We need to put in place regulation to dramatically cut the use of fossil fuels here in Ontario, and that is because, to the extent that we invest here and we regulate here, we create more jobs here, and, frankly, we reduce other air pollution problems that come from the burning of fossil fuels, not just greenhouse gas emissions.

We need to learn from what's gone wrong with other jurisdictions. In 2006, the Quebec government announced an action plan to spend \$1.55 billion over six years to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 14.6 megatonnes by 2012. However, a 2013 report found that Quebec had only cut greenhouse gas emissions by less than two megatonnes—only about 10% of their original goal.

The report found that Quebec's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions related to the transportation of merchandise resulted in a mere 8% cut as compared to the plan's projections.

Another plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture, food production, forestry and municipalities resulted in a cut that was less than 1% of the plan's projections.

L'Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique described the poor results as a "fiasco." Greenpeace was similarly scathing, saying that the government's great-sounding climate change plan had collapsed like a deflated balloon.

Quebec's Sustainable Development Commissioner warned about these disappointing results in his 2012 report which revealed that Quebec would not meet its 2012 GHG reduction targets. The report also said that the problems were evident from the beginning, noting that the government's plan lacked defined goals, timelines

and accountability measures: "The objectives are vague and are neither quantified nor accompanied by a timetable. The strategy is therefore general in scope; it does not make it possible to anticipate results or evaluate government performance over time."

We need to look at what went wrong in Quebec and we need to make sure that we don't repeat their mistakes. It's vital.

British Columbia's climate change policies similarly came under fire from its Auditor General, John Doyle. In 2013, Doyle reviewed British Columbia's carbon-neutral government policy which obliged BC's public sector to become carbon neutral through the purchase of carbon offsets from private companies. Doyle found that "the majority of offsets purchased to meet government's carbon-neutral goal in 2010 were not credible." The government was paying offsets to private companies for carbon reductions that would have happened anyway without the offset program.

Doyle examined two projects that received 70% of BC's public offset money in 2010. The Auditor General said, "In industry terms, these projects would be known as 'free riders.' Together, they received \$6 million in revenue for something that would have happened anyway."

The British Columbia government rejected the Auditor General's report, claiming the Auditor General lacked the necessary expertise to understand the complexities of the offset program. It sort of reminds me of a situation we've seen here with our own Auditor General, rightly criticizing electricity planning in Ontario. Even so, Speaker, BC later closed down the Pacific Carbon Trust, the government's crown carbon offset agency, and transferred the offset program to the environment ministry.

The government's Cap and Trade Program Design Options document says, "Cap-and-trade will be the primary tool for achieving Ontario's 2020 target." Again, Speaker, contrast that with California, which projects that 85% of its emissions reductions will come from complementary programs other than cap-and-trade. I think this is a fundamental problem in Ontario's strategy, and one that has to be addressed: an over-reliance on cap-and-trade when it comes to greenhouse gas reductions.

Cap-and-trade can be a useful thing; carbon pricing can be a useful thing. But it has to be understood in the perspective of a larger climate action plan and not be subjected to a whole bunch of hype about what it can do when, normally, it doesn't do it—it's not used that way. Effectiveness is a key matter. Let's learn from those other jurisdictions. Let's not repeat their mistakes.

I now want to speak to the question of fairness—fairness, first of all, for low- and middle-income households, and the need to provide for low-income and northern and remote support. Unfortunately, we don't see that in this bill or the minister's statements or the consultation document that the ministry put out a few months ago. That, Speaker, is a shocker. I don't think BC is a particularly progressive jurisdiction, but they recognize that it was something that had to be addressed.



When you look at the UK's climate budgeting plans, they actually talk about fuel poverty and how to address it. I have to say, I don't expect that they run an energy utopia. I would be shocked if anyone would say they ran an energy utopia, but they at least recognized that this is a substantial issue—one that has to be addressed, one that has to be taken into account—when they put together their climate plans.

In British Columbia, the carbon tax system provides up to \$200 per year per household for rural and northern households. In British Columbia, low-income households are paid rebates to help cope with higher fuel prices—almost \$400 per year for a family of four. Speaker, we can have a debate about whether that's the right amount or the wrong amount, but I have to say, that jurisdiction has gone through elections in which the carbon tax survived because they actually made concessions to fairness. A refusal to make concessions to fairness does not augur well for the future of this program.

1720

When you think about it, we have a health care system that benefits the whole society. Certainly it benefits individuals, but it benefits the whole society. We understand that people with high incomes are in a position to put more money in, and those with low incomes can only put in a small amount of money. But we know that the society as a whole benefits from funding of health care through a progressive tax system. We understand the benefits that come from that.

Taking action on climate change will benefit the whole society. Some will be able to contribute more than others, and the program and the plan have to be structured to recognize that and build in that support.

Low-income people spend a disproportionate share of their income on home heating, motor vehicle fuel and other expenses. Policies that increase the costs of these expenditures will have a disproportionate impact on low-income households.

A 2011 report, which was updated in 2013, by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Sierra Club, studied British Columbia's carbon tax from a perspective of fairness and social justice. The CCPA and Sierra Club noted that the carbon footprint of the people in the top 20% of income earners is not quite double that of people in the bottom 20%. Yes, high-income people burn more fossil fuels than low-income people. Meanwhile, the median after-tax income in the top group is more than five times the median after-tax income in the bottom group.

They write: "Relative to income, a carbon tax, like sales or consumption taxes, will have a regressive pattern—that is, low-income individuals and families will pay a greater share of their income to the tax because they consume all of their available income, and more"—they use household debt to fill in that gap—"and pay a greater proportion of their household budgets for energy. Higher-income households will pay more tax in absolute dollars because they consume more, but will pay a smaller share of that income to the tax."

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Sierra Club report also notes that lower-income households have much less control over their emissions. "For example, renters in apartment buildings will have more difficulty reducing heat or making investments in energy efficiency upgrades, and people living in suburban or rural areas will be much more automobile-dependent for their mobility." It's simple reality.

The Minister of Agriculture is here. He can speak about people in the rural areas around Peterborough who, my guess is, have to rely on their cars much more than people in downtown Toronto, because in the downtown part of Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton, there are transit systems. However inadequate we may find them at times, they are there, and they're an option.

The CCPA and Sierra Club report recommends a higher low-income rebate for British Columbia: "Half of carbon tax revenues should be used to fund a new refundable tax credit that reaches more households than the current low-income credit. We model a scenario where the bottom half of households"—and that's up to \$60,000 worth of income—"would receive, on average, more in credits than they pay in carbon tax."

In 2014, the Pembina Institute, well regarded in these matters, put out a fact sheet that identified four principles of a fair and effective carbon pricing system. One of these principles was, "Help low-income families be part of the solution."

In its submission to the provincial government in December 2015, the Canadian Environmental Law Association recommended: "There should be a legislated requirement to use revenue from the cap-and-trade program to counteract impacts of the program on low-income communities."

The submission recommends that at least 25% of cap-and-trade revenue, possibly more, should be used to mitigate the impacts on "low-income, First Nation and other marginalized communities."

Then the Canadian Environmental Law Association reaffirmed these principles in its February 2016 briefing, *Fair and Equitable Carbon Pricing: Comments on Ontario's Cap and Trade Program*.

I'm going to quote from that report because I think it should exist in our record, and because I think what they have to say is very important. They say, "The burdens of climate change are fundamentally unjust: Vulnerable communities that are responsible for the least carbon emissions are faced with the most severe effects of climate change. It is essential that Ontario achieve rapid and deep emissions reductions, however, carbon pricing programs are known to be regressive in that they unevenly affect vulnerable, low-income communities."

The cap-and-trade legislation must also provide explicit support for low-income and vulnerable communities in this transition. CELA, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, notes that the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change "indicated that it considers the issue of the use of proceeds from the cap-and-trade program not to be strictly within the scope of the program design."

Well, Speaker, if you want to be really strict, that may be true, but if you're talking about a program that works for the people of Ontario overall, you can't just be a technocrat. You have to think about people across the income spectrum, across the geographical spectrum, and design your program accordingly.

They write, "The design of the cap-and-trade program, however, will determine whether Ontario will have the resources to assist low-income communities with carbon reduction, or whether it will impose the double burden of climate change and regressive carbon pricing impacts on those most in need."

They note that "when Ontario experiences more frequent and severe extreme weather events, low-income individuals and remote communities are most vulnerable to infrastructure disruptions. The rising price of food caused by disruptions to the global production/supply chain will impact already food-insecure, low-income communities the hardest. Changes to plant and animal species ranges and the surge in invasive species will disproportionately affect First Nations traditional and subsistence food sources."

They conclude, "The cap-and-trade program, as proposed, does not adequately protect marginalized Ontarians. Their disproportionately high burden of climate change is twofold: They experience the negative impacts of a changing climate much more severely, and they are most affected by the pass-through costs of carbon pricing. Ontario's cap-and-trade proposal is an opportunity to tackle greenhouse gas emissions while also lifting underprivileged communities out of a cycle of poverty."

Speaker, their paper is thoughtful, comprehensive, logical and in tune with the realities of Ontario. But they aren't the only ones who have made such comments. The Clean Economy Alliance in their report *Getting It Right: Design Recommendations for Ontario's Cap-and-Trade System* recommended that some cap-and-trade revenues be used for "mitigation of climate impacts on low-income and otherwise marginalized communities."

As I noted previously, BC's carbon tax has a special rebate for low-income families. A 2012 California law mandates that at least 25% of cap-and-trade auction revenues must be spent on programs that benefit disadvantaged communities. Alberta's new carbon tax plan proposes a consumer rebate, which would be sufficient to offset the impact of carbon pricing on most households in the bottom 60% of income in Alberta and would make most low-income Albertans much better off.

Speaker, it is not politically impossible to design climate programs that actually make a difference in terms of low-income households. It is entirely possible. In fact, it is politically necessary and ethically necessary to make those changes.

Meanwhile, the Ontario government's Cap-and-Trade Program Design Options document from November 2015 lists "Overarching Design Principles." The principle of fairness is not one that is listed, nor does fairness receive much consideration in the government stakeholder feedback report from January 2016.

In Ontario, people living in remote and northern communities face a disproportionate burden with few options available for reducing it. Not only are their energy needs greater because of colder temperatures, they often lack access to low-carbon choices that are commonly available in southern Ontario, such as transit. In fact, while GO bus service in the south is subsidized and carries no sales tax, the Ontario Northland bus service is expected to be self-funding, and riders must pay HST on their fares. In order to cut costs, the Ontario Northland transit corporation recently raised fares by 6%, closed bus terminals and reduced service. Is that going to help people take on greenhouse gas emissions? Will that help them cut their car use? I don't think so. This comes after the government promised enhanced bus service to replace the Ontario Northland rail service, which the government cut in 2012.

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One can say very clearly that here is a program, on one side, saying that we're going to do a lot about greenhouse gas reductions, and on the other side, concrete actions that make it more difficult for people in northern Ontario to reduce their carbon footprint. That does not augur well for the Liberal climate plan.

I want to turn lastly to the question of transparency. In the 2015 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, the government projects that the cap-and-trade system will generate \$300 million in 2016-17 and \$1.3 billion in 2017-18. The government has committed to "ensuring that all proceeds from a cap-and-trade program would be dedicated to actions that reduce GHG emissions and build the foundation of new sustainable prosperity for the province's households and businesses."

In the fiscal review, the government also proposed to create a Green Investment Fund "that will be targeted at reducing greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening the economy. Through this initial investment, the fund will support energy retrofits in homes (including affordable housing), energy-efficiency investments in small and medium-sized businesses and industry, support for aboriginal communities, and new investments in electric vehicle infrastructure." The fund will be seeded by a \$325-million down payment—government sources all.

But it's not clear whether all cap-and-trade funds will flow to the fund or exactly what it means for cap-and-trade revenue to be dedicated, and this is a government that likes to play games with dedicated funds, as we've seen with last December's very quiet dismantling of the Trillium Trust as a special-purpose account dedicated to infrastructure. Playing games with climate change funds is playing with dynamite: dangerous all around.

The bill before us sets up an accounting procedure known as the greenhouse gas reduction account to track accounting transactions associated with the cap-and-trade system. Unlike the existing greenhouse gas reduction account that was established with Bill 185 in 2009 to receive cap-and-trade revenue, this new account does not record the in-flows and out-flows of money like a piggy bank. The greenhouse gas reduction account is now an



abstract accounting procedure with rules for when the balance in the account may increase and when it can decrease. Carbon allowance sale revenue, system fees and penalties are to be recognized by an entry in the account, which is not the same thing—not at all the same thing—as saying that cap-and-trade money will actually flow into this account. The balance of the account can be reduced by an amount equal to any expenditure related, and I love this phrasing, “directly or indirectly”—because indirectly can be pretty tenuous.

My colleague from Parkdale–High Park can talk about the Union Pearson Express and how someone might say that indirectly it helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One could then say, “Well, we could allocate money to the deficit from the Union Pearson Express,” and the money will have been correctly allocated. I think people would go out of their minds. I think they would be extraordinarily angry.

Speaker, it’s not just this language, “directly or indirectly,” talking about expenditures for this greenhouse gas reduction account. We could talk about the administration or enforcement of the cap-and-trade program that the government believes “is reasonably likely to reduce, or support the reduction of, greenhouse gas and costs relating to any other initiatives that are reasonably likely to do so,” or any reimbursements to the government for costs related directly or indirectly to these purposes. We’re starting to get into really tenuous territory here, really vague “Yeah, it looks kind of green; I think we’ll pay for it out of that account” territory.

In fact, the Financial Accountability Officer has commented on the most recent budget, and he has an interesting commentary. He says, “Assuming that both cap-and-trade proceeds and the expected new federal transfers will largely be tied to new spending initiatives, both sources of revenue may prove to be fiscally neutral...” But, he says, “It is unclear to what extent these new revenues”—he’s talking about cap-and-trade—“will be directly tied to new program spending or can be used to fund existing spending commitments.” In other words, Speaker, this money that’s being collected could be used to flow and deal with other political problems the government has as long as someone can put a very thin coat of green paint on them—and maybe not even a full coat of paint, maybe just a green Magic Marker. That’s all you need.

The criteria are loose and the accounting is so abstract, there’s no guarantee any of the cap-and-trade revenue will deliver meaningful, independently verifiable greenhouse gas reductions. That is a huge risk, and I say it to everyone in this chamber who’s concerned about climate change. To the extent that we reproduce what was done in British Columbia where a fund was set up that effectively had no impact on greenhouse gas reductions that allowed funding of projects that would have gone forward without that money; and to the extent that the people of Ontario don’t see this as legit, then the credibility of the program is profoundly undermined and the government needs to change this bill so that not only

is the disposition of the money clean but it is seen and understood to be clean. It needs it for credibility. That is a great moment in this bill, in this matter.

The legislation is written to allow cap-and-trade money to be applied even against projects that are already funded within the current fiscal framework, thus freeing up money to be spent on anything. Right now, the minister must provide a review to the Treasury Board for any project whose funding is to be attributed to the greenhouse gas reduction account. This review may—may—consider various things, such as potential greenhouse gas reductions of the initiative or its relationship to the action plan. There appears to be no requirement that the review be made public.

What if the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change gets a program proposal put on his desk and he concludes that this won’t make any difference at all? The Treasury Board or the management board can say, “We want that project anyway. Your review will never be public. It’ll be buried. It’s a cabinet document. No one will ever read this.” The ability for people to hold the government to account and feel that they can hold the government to account is profoundly weak the way this is written, and that undermines climate action in this province. That undermines climate action.

The experience in Quebec shows why this could be a concern. Just like Ontario’s proposal, all the revenues from Quebec’s cap-and-trade system are committed to a Green Fund. But an April 2015 report from Clean Energy Canada summarizing the findings of various observers of Quebec’s cap-and-trade system questioned the transparency of the Green Fund expenditures, noting that this money often serves “highly political objectives.”

The Green Fund spending in Quebec was also criticized by Quebec’s Sustainable Development Commissioner Jean Cinq-Mars. Cinq-Mars’ 2014-15 report said that Green Fund spending lacked project criteria, calls for proposals, clearly defined objectives and program information. “When the departments choose projects without launching a call for proposals beforehand or without considering other recipients, there is a risk of inequity. In addition, the lack of specific assessment criteria does not make it possible to ensure that the best projects are selected,” said the commissioner. For those who are interested, you can go to his report, page 19.

A recent submission from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce also expresses concerns about the lack of detail about how and where the provincial government intends to spend cap-and-trade revenue. They say that “there remain outstanding details, including how the remaining revenue will be used and how the allocation of revenue will be administered. These questions must be answered quickly to ensure that the programs and policies that will help businesses, households and others adjust to cap-and-trade are available when the system launches.”

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They go on to say, “Cap-and-trade proceeds should not be directed into general government revenue. It is

important that the allocation of the revenue be objective and transparent. To increase transparency, the government should consider the creation of an arm's-length organization to administer this revenue.

"In addition, the government needs to clearly define the principles that it will adopt when deciding how to invest revenue from the cap-and-trade system."

Speaker, we have lost decades taking action on this issue—literally decades—and the consequences could be very stark, and they could appear very soon in our lives. Fifteen, 20 years ago, people thought this was a problem our grandchildren would deal with—bad as that would be, disturbing as that is. But that timeline has changed. Things are happening much faster and much more profoundly than we thought five years ago or 10 years ago.

So it is critical that climate legislation that comes before us actually is successful; that it is fair so that there is buy-in; that it is effective so it will make the change and the difference that we need; that it is transparent so that people feel that it is credible.

We have a very small window to get it right—very small. Speaker, it is important for the government to actually listen to the criticisms and commentary and suggestions levelled from all sides in this Legislature; listen carefully when we go to committee for commentary and amend the bill so that it is overtly—strongly—fair, effective and transparent.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm delighted for this opportunity to get up and give comment to the member from Toronto-Danforth's speech. As the environmental critic for the third party, we know him to be very passionate, very well informed and very thoughtful in his analysis of the issues before us, and I appreciate it very much. I've had the pleasure to meet the member on the doorstep, as he had been representing me for many, many years as I lived in Toronto-Danforth. I feel some sense of regret that I have moved out of the riding and am now in my own riding. I can only hope that the MPP who represents the area I now live in is as effective a representative as the one in Toronto-Danforth.

Speaker, the member talked about the three principles: effective, fair and transparent. I'm delighted for the general support of the party and the member for this piece of legislation, and I'm delighted that he's identified those three critical components, because I believe those exist in this bill.

Certainly, the effectiveness piece: He talked at length about the BC plan, which is really more of a tax and dividend. You don't get, out of tax and dividend, the kinds of carbon reductions that we can expect out of a cap-and-trade program that's rigorously enforced. So we know that we'll be effective in getting the kinds of reductions that are necessary to meet our megatonne reduction targets, and I'm looking forward to it.

Fair: I get the point about the proportionate impact on low-income people, and it's a concern to all of us.

Proportionate, however—the higher-income families will be spending a lot more and will be contributing a lot more through the increased costs. And there are measures being put in place in order to assist low-income people, through, for instance, the \$100 million announced for retrofit programs, which will allow them to replace windows, weather stripping, new furnaces and water heaters. That will help reduce expenditures on energy and help them meet their targets.

Certainly, transparent: We know this is a transparent bill—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm very pleased to have spent the last hour listening to the hour leadoff of the environmental critic for the third party. The member from Toronto-Danforth has done a good job. Like he mentioned the other day, while we may not always agree on everything, I find the member's thoughts very provocative, and I respect his position and his passion.

Where we do agree is that whatever we do in Ontario—because climate change is, indeed, a very serious issue—the greenhouse gas reduction initiatives have to have a real, tangible impact. When I had my hour leadoff, I spoke about some of the very things we heard the member speak of. We need efficiencies, we need innovation and we need conservation, things that we have not seen this government move on for over a decade.

For goodness' sake, we need to always be mindful that whatever path we choose is indeed fair. It needs to be fair to the Ontario taxpayer, but it also needs to be fair to Ontario manufacturers and businesses. We worry about the leakage and how the tax-and-trade scheme that's coming down the pipeline from this Liberal Party will scare off people looking to invest in Ontario.

We again come back to the principle that, whatever we do here in Ontario to tackle climate change, we need to stand tall, and we need to encourage innovation. All the while, we need to be mindful of what the taxpayer can bear.

We need a credible plan, and we have not seen it from this particular governing party. Bill 172 has a lot of problems that we'll be addressing in further debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Our critic gave an amazing overview of how we feel about this piece of legislation. We've been consistent in our support of cap-and-trade as a rule, but he highlighted some of the gaps and the weaknesses in Bill 172.

For me, the biggest takeaway is that any plan coming forward has to have some credibility, and the credibility will ensure that you get buy-in into the plan. But even today, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed what the critic has said. He questioned whether any funding "will be directly tied to new program spending" or will be used for existing commitments.

This is a slippery slope. You can't blame us for having a breach of confidence, if you will. This government does



not have the best record on spending money on things they said that they were going to spend money on.

The fairness piece is very real. It's very real for the people of this province. Is it fair to ask northerners to pay the same price as those of us who do have some transit options? Northerners don't have a train; you took it away. Northerners don't even have reliable bus service; you compromised that as well. So there are great inconsistencies in this plan, and the disparity in the rolling out of this strategy already has been very inconsistent.

We do have some concerns around fairness, around transparency, as the Financial Accountability Officer already confirmed today, and to ensure that it will be effective.

You already tried it in 2009. He quoted Mr. Gerretsen, who said that your plan was going to be bold. There wasn't anything bold about that plan. That plan was to make a plan to make another plan.

We need action, and it needs to serve the needs of this province. The critic did a wonderful job of bringing that to light.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I was glad the member took such a thoughtful approach in his almost 60-minute oration in the House today. It's obvious that the NDP at least agrees that climate change is a problem and that the proposal by the government merits a lot of favourable consideration. He had some good suggestions.

I was particularly pleased that he was not influenced by the \$10,000-a-plate dinner that was held at the Royal York hotel. There's always a worry about that, because they brought in Rachel Notley, and that brought in, Mr. Speaker—I'll tell you how this works in. That brought in—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the deputy House leader to stick to the debate that's in front of us.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I was afraid that the oil barons from Alberta were going to influence the NDP policy, because it was \$10,000 a plate.

But it did not influence the member, the environment critic. I can see that, and I'm very pleased it did not. But you can understand my concern when I saw that we had a Premier from another province coming in here as the bait, and then all the oil barons showed up at the Royal York with their Stetsons on and were shelling out \$10,000.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Agriculture, if you're going to heckle, you have to go to your seat.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** The reason I mention that, which may appear to be a little off topic, is because the leader of the NDP, just a little while ago, was talking about Liberal friends on Bay Street. I'm wondering how many of those people from Bay Street—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Deputy House leader, please, please. I'd like you to stick to the previous person's debate.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm doing my best. I'll conclude this way: Despite all that, I thought the member had a very thoughtful and reasoned speech this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Toronto–Danforth, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I thank you, Speaker. You're very kind to give me two.

I want to thank the member from Huron–Bruce for her comments, my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and the deputy House leader for his always creative meanderings when he gets up to speak. I know he's committed to this issue, and I know he'll go back to caucus and fight very hard for my private member's bill to stop fracking in Ontario. I'm sure that he and others will be able to resist the pressures of gas and oil companies to actually take action on climate change. I'm very hopeful that the deputy House leader will actually go and do those things.

The member for Beaches–East York spoke as well. I have to say to the member that he should have listened more closely to what I said, because I felt the bill, as written, was not fair, transparent or effective, that it needed substantial revision, and that \$100 million that was allocated for home retrofits through Union Gas and Enbridge Gas is not necessarily targeted to low-income households. It doesn't deal with people who have oil heat. It doesn't deal with a whole bunch of people out there who—

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Or wood heat.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** —or wood heat—a whole bunch of people out there who are tenants, who will not be able to get that assistance, but whose landlords will be able to crank up the bills when they see higher energy costs.

I think that member and the government need to think very seriously about changes that are required that will allow this bill to move forward and do what's needed in terms of greenhouse gas reductions, but also develop the credibility and social licence that will be necessary for it to be accepted and for it to go forward.

Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address the House.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time of day, this House stands adjourned until next Monday morning at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1753.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
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Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	



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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
		Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu
		Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
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Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 41<sup>st</sup> Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 41<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 7 March 2016

Lundi 7 mars 2016



Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 March 2016

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mars 2016

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Maybe the member from Sarnia–Lambton will be introducing this gentleman as well, but we have a mutual friend, Lorne Given, here from Sarnia–Lambton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll allow that; that always happens.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Ajax page captain Bianca Padilla's family. We only have two of them inside. The rest are coming in. They were waiting outside.

I'm going to ask the two members of the family, the aunt and the brother, to stand—come on, stand right up. Are you standing, Carlo? Oh, that's not Carlo; he's outside as well. He's a former page, and he's here today. Also here are her aunt Joyce Gutierrez and cousin Ava Aquino. They're sitting in the members' gallery today.

At the same time, I've got to tell you that the full class from St. Patrick Catholic School are here today, and they will be in the gallery momentarily, and they'll be here for the photo as well. It's an honour to welcome them.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** That's a hard act to follow.

I'd like to welcome to the members' west galley Mr. Lorne Given, a long-time friend and a member of my executive, and also a nephew of one of our long-time Conservative members here, Lorne Henderson.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I would like to welcome once again Cheryl Davies and Borden Craddock, who are the mother and grandmother of page Owen Davies from my riding of London West, and who have joined us today in the public gallery. Welcome.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** This past weekend, the member from Newmarket–Aurora did not get older; he just got better. I'd like us all to wish him a very happy birthday.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today I'd like to welcome Sami Pritchard from the Walkerton/Hanover area, Scarlett Raczynski from Clinton, and their colleagues Jessica Kearney and James Westman, who are joining us today.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** This weekend—just yesterday, in fact—our colleague the honourable member from Durham celebrated a birthday. Let's join in wishing him a happy birthday.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Page captain Dhruv Upadhyay's mother and sister are in the gallery: Nilu and Tanisi.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'd hoped they would have joined us right now, but they are on their way in. The head of the provincial building trades in Ontario, Mr. Pat Dillon, and his right-hand person, former OLIP intern Igor Delov, will be joining us today.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** She is making her way in. Her name is Darquise Frappier from École secondaire Felix-Ricard. She is one of the Ontario Junior Citizen Award recipients, and she will be receiving her award this afternoon. She's not quite in, but that was the end of introductions.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I'd like to introduce my friend Jeff Mole, who's in the visitors' gallery. Jeff is an activist around community energy solutions and community conservation, and a great citizen of Ontario.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question is for the Acting Premier. I had the privilege—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm very much aware of the happenings in the province, and I'm going to ask that we spend a moment just to reflect on what my job is. I would like to be able to provide all questioners and those giving answers with the appropriate attention that they deserve.

Leader?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** I had the privilege of touring the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre this past weekend. I was moved by the work they do. But the truth is that mental health care facilities in Ontario need the government's help. The geriatric hospital wing at the Royal has a three-month waiting list. Drug addiction services have an even longer waiting list.

I asked the staff and the physicians at the Royal what we could do, what we could raise at Queen's Park, and they said, "Tell the government, and tell the Minister of Health to stop cutting our mental health facilities."

Will the government commit to supporting mental health in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm hoping, based on that question, that the official opposition will support us in our budget, because, in fact, we are increasing our funding, not just generally in hospitals—an additional \$345 million to hospitals—but specifically to our in-patient mental health hospitals across this province.

We have made a substantial new increase this year, and I would hope that the member opposite would recognize that it's important for these hospitals in the context of the transformations that we're undergoing. They're moving with us, in terms of reform to funding models, focusing more on outcomes and what truly benefits patients.

We're also moving more and more of the patients who we can provide support to into the community, where they can be best cared for. The evidence demonstrates the outcomes are better in the community. So we're making these reforms with our hospitals.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about outcomes? The outcome and the reality is the government's not doing enough. There is not enough when mental illness affects one in three people during their lifetime. The funding is not enough when one in three hospitalizations is caused by mental illness. We know that 70% of mental health issues emerging are in the teen years. The government needs to make the resources available for our youth, but this government has done the opposite. They have cut mental health.

My question to the Acting Premier or the Minister of Health is, will you commit to stopping the cuts in our mental health facilities?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Once again, we're increasing our funding to mental health across this province. We're in the middle of a new expansion program, a new \$138 million in our mental health and addiction services in the most recent budget that's been tabled. We've increased, specifically, an allocation wholly dedicated to our mental health hospitals.

The Royal, as well, has benefitted from a substantial new investment in a dedicated CT scan that will benefit patients who are challenged by mental illness. There are many, many things that we're doing to transform our mental health services across the province, including at the Royal in Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** No one believes this government is doing enough on mental health. The reality is, mental health is just as important as physical health, but this Premier and this government don't recognize how cruel it is that they go out during Bell Let's Talk month and say, "Come forward. Have the courage to ask for treatment," and then they cut that treatment. How hypocritical. How wrong. You want to talk—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The leader will withdraw.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carry on.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** The reality is, when you actually go and visit these centres—when I visited Ontario Shores, they said the cuts were too much. They had to fire staff. At the Royal last year, they had to cut 18 staff

members who are needed on the front lines dealing with mental health in Ontario; 18 people were cut.

The question is, I appreciate you've got your talking points, but every mental health facility is cutting staff.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And if you continue, I'll have to deal with you.

Now, I've already mentioned it once. I'll mention it a second time, and that will be the end. While I'm trying to speak and I'm standing, giving people instructions, the minute I sit down, I hear heckling. I'm going to go after those individuals.

Number two, would the member please address the Chair.

Minister.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It's right there in the budget document on page 117, the important investments, the new investments that we're making in our mental health and addiction services, including in our hospitals.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important to also recognize that mental health is evolving in the sense that the outcomes—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Carry on.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As the finance minister is reminding me, more than \$16 million to mental health services, in addition to \$138 million that we're investing in community care, because I would hope the leader of the official opposition would recognize that we need to follow the evidence and the science and what best outcomes exist for those with mental health challenges. Often, that's moving them into the community and providing supportive care, like the 1,000 new supportive—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

*Interjection.*

Member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

New question?

## CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, since I can't get a straight answer about why every mental health facility in Ontario has had to cut staff, let's try something else.

A recent Forum poll had some interesting information. It said that there is strong disapproval for the Liberal version of cap-and-trade. It said nearly 60% of the people in Ontario disapprove of cap-and-trade as a cash grab. If you want to get public buy-in, if you—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Making references to "you" means you're not speaking to me. I need to be included in this. Please, it helps. As far as I'm concerned, if it continues on this side, I'm doing the same thing.

Please finish.



**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to get public buy-in for their environmental policies, it can't simply be a cash grab. It has to be revenue-neutral. Will the government commit to making their cap-and-trade policy revenue-neutral?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I do want to start by sincerely congratulating the Leader of the Opposition for his change of heart on the environment. I think all of us were heightened to see your position on that.

The tricky part, though, is this: There have been some flip-flops. Now he's supporting the environment, but for nine years, as a member of the Harper caucus, he sat on his—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** This has got to stop—  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No. You do.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** He sat on his hands when—

*Interjection.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Huron—Bruce.

Please finish.  
**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The now-Leader of the Opposition sat on his hands when Harper withdrew from the Kyoto—

*Interjections.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

I'm going to take a position on this that I want to talk about government policy. If there are going to be responses or questions that lead to that, I'm going to say fine. If it doesn't lead to that—talk about government policy, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is about policy, because Canada's reputation was harmed—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'm not going to debate this: provincial government policy.  
Start the clock. Wrap up, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, now the Leader of the Opposition says that he believes that climate change is a major threat to Ontario, but when he ran for leadership not that long ago, he said, "It would not be my plan to bring in a cap-and-trade system or a carbon tax."

Now the PC leader says that we have to do something about climate change, and that something includes putting a price on carbon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** My question was on revenue neutrality. I wasn't asking for smears, attacks or insults. This is a serious public policy question.

The reality is this government's proposal will cause the average family in Ontario to pay \$387 more. That's not right. This plan must include corresponding tax relief for individuals and businesses if you want to have the public's buy-in.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have to stop making life more expensive for everyone in Ontario. Why won't this government give families a break? Will you commit that this will not be a Liberal slush fund and that you will give it back to the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** So, Speaker, on Saturday we—

*Interjections.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** When I get the attention, it's not the moment for you to then start interjecting. It's actually when you're supposed to stop.  
Finish, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The PC leader said on Saturday that there was practically universal support in the caucus for carbon pricing, but just last week, the environment critic said that it was PC policy not to support cap-and-trade.

"Premier," the environment critic said, "will you heed the advice of the PC Party of Ontario and commit to not implementing a carbon tax?" So, Speaker, it's pretty hard to tell the flips from the flops, but we're glad that you decided—

*Interjections.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Patrick Brown:** Again to the Acting Premier: Once again, I did not get an answer on revenue neutrality.

**1050**  
Let me say, our environment critic is a phenomenal MPP, and what she said last week was that we don't need a cap-and-trade policy that's simply another Liberal slush fund. So let me say this very clearly: This plan can't be another Colleague; it can't be another Metrolinx slush fund. It can't be like the business grant program that the Auditor General says was completely abused and not transparent. The money can't go to Liberal pet projects. A revenue-neutral plan must be subject to independent oversight.

Will the government agree here today that it will not be another Liberal slush fund, it will be conditional on oversight, and that the government will actually give it back to the people of Ontario?

*Interjections.*  
**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy Premier.  
**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

*Interjections.*  
**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, there seem to be some big holes in the opposition's position. The first one is this: As you know, the Financial Accountability Officer reported last week that, by regulation—and I'll send it by the page over to the member of the official opposition—this is a regulatory fee; this money can only legally be spent on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It would be nice, now that the Leader of the Opposition knows that, if he could be honest.

But I am curious. Did he tell people on Saturday that his tax would be \$160 a tonne, 10 times what it would be under a cap-and-trade system? How did that work out with the people that he promised he would never

introduce a carbon price tax, because the carbon tax doesn't have a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. New question.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Acting Premier. The Liberals are nearly doubling drug costs for most seniors. On top of that, on page 180 of the budget, it says that the government is cutting \$200 million from the Ontario drug benefit that helps seniors pay for their medication. How much of that \$200 million will be coming out of seniors' pockets?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our drug program that provides nearly 5,000 different medications to Ontarians, including our seniors, but many others of low income that are deserving of those medicines. It is a program which we continue to invest in, about \$150 million a year, or a 3% increase in that budget on an annual basis.

We've made important changes and measures in this budget so that an additional 170,000 people will go from paying a \$100 deductible to paying a zero-dollar deductible. That's an important measure that's going to benefit so many Ontarians. It will bring to that category almost 500,000 seniors who will not pay any annual deductible at all. I would hope that that's something that the third party would appreciate. It provides support to those who truly need it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What the minister is not admitting to is that under the Liberals' plan, more seniors will be paying more for their prescription drugs. On top of nearly doubling what most seniors will pay, the Liberals are cutting \$200 million from the seniors' drug coverage. Why doesn't this government focus on expanding prescription drug coverage and protecting universal access to health care instead of cutting supports for seniors?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** We continue to increase our drug program, including for seniors, year after year after year, and I think it's important that Ontarians understand that we have the most generous drug program for seniors in the entire country. It's true that the out-of-pocket expenses, on average, for a senior are approximately \$277 in Ontario. The next closest province is approximately \$600. That includes provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec, which are more than double the out-of-pocket expenses for seniors. So we have the most generous program.

We need to make some changes in order to ensure the sustainability of the program. I believe Ontarians appreciate that we should direct our greatest effort to those who need the help the most. That's what we're intending to do with this budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, not only are the Liberals planning to make seniors pay more for medication; their plan is to cut \$200 million from the Ontario drug benefit. That means less funding for seniors' medication.

Why are the Liberals cutting \$200 million and forcing seniors to pay more for their prescriptions instead of investing in expanding coverage so that more seniors have access to affordable medications?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** While we are continuing to increase our funding for drug programs, including for our seniors, what we're doing is we're shifting somewhat the responsibility for those seniors who can most afford it to help 170,000 more seniors pay no annual deductible.

But that's not all we're doing for our seniors. We're also increasing our funding by \$75 million for hospices and palliative and end-of-life care. We're adding the shingles vaccine, a free vaccine, an estimated \$170 saving to each senior. We're removing the debt retirement charges, which will save our seniors, on average, an additional \$70 per year.

We actually reduced the number of prescriptions that a pharmacist is allowed to charge for monthly, from up to 12 down to four. That's going to save an enormous amount of money in the reduced co-payment costs for our seniors—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —needing to go to pharmacists less.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Acting Premier. It's been 12 days since the Premier announced her plan to nearly double the cost of medication for seniors in Ontario. It took her five days to realize that that was a mistake. Now she's giving herself until the end of March, Speaker, to figure out whether a senior making \$19,500 a year is affluent.

Has this Liberal government realized that their plan will nearly double medication costs for struggling seniors, or do they need 24 more days to figure out whether or not a senior earning \$19,500 a year is actually affluent?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I was a bit taken aback when the deputy leader of the NDP announced that they would proudly vote against this budget.

What that means is that the NDP is voting against free tuition for low-income students and reduced costs for middle-class families. They're voting against the biggest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history, one that's going to create 110,000 jobs each year. They're voting against increasing health care funding by \$1 billion, including \$345 million for hospital funding. They're voting against \$178 million for affordable housing and homelessness initiatives. They're voting against lowering hospital parking fees. They're voting against the shingles



vaccine. They're voting against 170,000 more Ontario seniors getting zero deductible—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We will proudly be voting against a Liberal plan that will leave seniors paying more for their drug costs. The Premier has given herself more than three weeks to figure out what everyone in Ontario already knows: that struggling seniors cannot afford to pay more for their medication. And on top of making seniors pay more, the Liberals are planning to cut \$200 million from the seniors' drug benefit.

These are things that New Democrats don't support, Speaker. It should be no surprise to the Liberals that New Democrats actually believe in pharmacare and in more opportunity. Universality is what we believe in. The Liberals have no such belief.

Will this government stop cutting and instead make medication more affordable for more seniors?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It seems to me that the only criticism the third party has of this budget is an item that the Premier has already said we're going to take another look at. So they're voting against making the shingles vaccines free for eligible seniors. They're voting against \$100 million to help people reduce their home energy bills. They're voting against eliminating the Drive Clean \$30 fee. They're voting against reducing auto insurance. They're voting against 250,000 four- and five-year-olds having access to full-day kindergarten. They're voting against supports to an innovative program for high school students to assist with financial literacy. They're voting against \$75 million for hospice and community care. They're voting against \$333 million to support kids with autism.

1100

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Acting Premier doesn't have to worry, Speaker. New Democrats will be talking quite a bit over the next number of days about all of the things in this budget that we have serious problems with.

However, today I'm asking specifically about the fact that seniors have seen their drug costs double. Seniors have also seen wait-lists for long-term care get longer and longer. They're waiting months on months for home care. If the Acting Premier wants the list, I'll give it to her. They've seen physiotherapy services cut. They're struggling to pay their heating bills. And now, the Premier is increasing their medication costs and slashing the Ontario drug benefit.

When will Ontario seniors get the respect that they deserve from this Liberal government?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, the NDP are saying that they are going to vote against \$250 million more to home and community care. The NDP is saying they're voting against free tuition for the kids in the lowest income—actually, income up to \$50,000 a year. This is a life-changing initiative in this budget. The old NDP would have been standing up and cheering this

news. The new NDP is just stuck on one issue that we've already said we will review.

There are other things in the budget, including GO service to Niagara. Now, I am a bit surprised that the NDP would not be supporting GO service to Niagara, considering that they've been big advocates of this. There's a lot in this budget. It's an important, progressive budget—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.

New question.

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Minister, I have a document here that outlines an RFP issued by the LCBO on February 24, one day before the budget was released. It states that the LCBO is seeking a real estate vendor to sell 250 LCBO store locations right across the province. Section 3.2.1 states, "The LCBO's main intention is to sell properties," and 3.2.3 says the LCBO will consider leasing out properties that are deemed unsaleable or if they can generate high revenue from a tenant.

Speaker, can the minister tell us just how much money he expects this sale to bring in for the province, what will happen to these LCBO locations and how many jobs will be cut or otherwise affected as a result of this sale?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who I believe recognizes the tremendous contribution that the LCBO provides our province by way of dividends, recognizing that the expertise of the LCBO is operating a retail organization that has tremendous value. We recognize the work it does as a distributor for the benefit of Ontarians, who then realize on some of those proceeds for hospital investments, for education—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** —and for infrastructure investments. That's their priority, Mr. Speaker. They're doing a good job and—

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Answer the question.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Right after I asked the member to come to order, he just kept yelling, so I'm going to say second time to the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Just wrap up, please. Are you finished? Thank you.

Supplementary.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, I can take from the fact that we didn't get an answer about the 250 stores that they're selling 250 stores across Ontario. That's plain and simple. It's curious that the RFP went out before the budget was released, yet none of those details were in the budget: no details on which 250 locations, no details on how many thousands of jobs will be cut, no details on the financial impact this will have on the bottom line.

Speaker, I wonder: Is this more Liberal furniture-burning to heat the home? Is this another part of the Liberal plan to balance their budget? I ask the minister: Why were you keeping details of this sale of LCBO stores secret from the people of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. Thank you.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, I think you're getting close.

Minister?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Here comes scandal number five.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, second time.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** There's no secret that this side of the House supports the LCBO, supports the work that they're doing. We are continuing to provide all the supports necessary for the LCBO to succeed. It's why they are the wholesalers of the distribution that's being advanced to grocery chains, for example.

The member opposite makes reference to secrecy. Well, there may be some market and commercial sensitivities. This I can say, though: LCBO stores and the distribution network will continue with the same complement that it has now because it benefits all of Ontarians. What may occur in respect to a leased premise or an owned premise will be up to the LCBO to determine the best value for taxpayer money and the best value for our returns. The member opposite, as finance critic, should know better.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Speaker, students and families in London are contacting my office, concerned about the possible closure of the Robarts School for the Deaf and the Amethyst school in London. Families wonder why the minister has cut off enrolment into provincial and demonstration schools if she is really only just consulting. They wonder why this government capped enrolment at 42 when the program has space for 138 students.

Children in London have been waiting and hoping for months, only to learn that they may never get these specialized services in the schools. The closure of both schools leaves students in southwestern Ontario with nowhere else to turn.

Speaker, why is the minister trying to balance the budget on the backs of some of our most vulnerable students?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I want to start out by assuring everyone that at the moment we are consulting on the future of the programs to make sure that we serve deaf children in Ontario and children with very severe learn-

ing needs in the best way possible. No decisions have been made. I want to emphasize that.

While we're doing the consultation, we have put a pause on accepting enrolments because we need to figure out the best way to deliver the programs going forward.

I've been visiting the demonstration schools, which deal with children with very severe learning disabilities. The demonstration schools have some wonderful programs. The problem is, though, that we have thousands of kids in the province who need support with reading.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Parents are concerned. They're concerned, they're contacting my office, and they want us to be the voice so that this minister will listen.

Speaker, back to the minister: Students who want to attend specialized schools like Robarts or Amethyst should have the right to do so. These are some of the most vulnerable kids in our province. They deserve better. Their families deserve better.

Thousands of parents have signed petitions online begging the minister and her government to keep these important schools open. This weekend we heard from Becca Haggit, a student who attends Amethyst and has benefited deeply from it. She is advocating for herself and for the rights of other children with unique needs who need to access these schools. The minister needs to listen to students who are directly impacted by these specialized programs.

Speaker, will the minister guarantee today that neither Amethyst nor Robarts will be closed because of consultations—yes or no?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** If I could just talk a little bit about the Amethyst school, which, just to clarify, is for children with severe learning disabilities, many of the children who are at Amethyst are six or even eight grade levels behind, in terms of their reading skills. They're kids who are intelligent kids, but they just haven't been able to learn to read.

We know that the kids who are at Amethyst are not the only kids in the province who are struggling with learning to read. We know that there are other kids in the province who haven't had the opportunity to go to Amethyst who are struggling to learn to read. We need to figure out how we help all the kids who are struggling to learn to read but have average intelligence. There is a bigger group, and we need to think through our programs carefully.

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#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. John Fraser:** Ma question est pour le ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts. Minister, the 2016-17 budget contained many positive measures to grow our economy for Ontarians. Among them was continued support for your Ministry of Natural Resources.



The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry oversees industries that Ontarians rely on every day, industries like aggregates and wood products that build our schools, hospitals and homes, and that thousands of Ontarians rely on for jobs. The ministry also works to protect the public, its plants and its wildlife while providing opportunities to experience our natural heritage.

Can the minister share how this government's budget is supporting the activities of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member for the question. As most people will know, certainly most people in northern Ontario will know, the forest industry really felt the downturn of the recession two or three years before the 2008 recession really took hold in the rest of the province. As a result of that, our government came forward with a broad suite of programs, many of which are still in existence, valued at well over \$1 billion, which continue to support, and have supported, the forestry industry in Ontario.

Currently, we're working very hard representing the interests of our industry on the international stage. As many will know, the softwood lumber agreement is currently being renegotiated. We're doing our best to represent the Ontario industry in that regard. We still have a very significant roads funding program in place to support the industry.

As well, Speaker, I would add that we have created a new program that supports the forest industry here in Ontario. The Forestry Growth Fund is a new program under the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which will help forestry on a go-forward basis with our capital projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to thank the minister for his response.

Minister, there has been some confusion in the media recently with regard to service and licence fees within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. I know that service fees collected by your ministry support activities valuable to many Ontarians. Amongst the most visible and impactful are Ontario's parks.

Can the minister correct the record in this Legislature around the fees and the activities that such fees support?

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** Again, I want to thank the member for the question and the opportunity to correct the record. I've done this at least once before, Speaker, and further about the things that such fees and the broader budget do support.

First and foremost, recreational fish and wildlife licences are not going up as part of budget 2016. Further existing fees are used exclusively to support the management of fish and wildlife for today and tomorrow.

There's a planned increase of about 50 cents per car per night for visitors to Ontario parks. These fees, as well as seasonal lot fees, contribute to Ontario parks' ability to be more than 85% self-funded. I think that's important to remember.

More than that, the budget also contains new money for important parks infrastructure that will enhance the

experience of visitors to Ontario parks. Ontario parks, like Rideau River and Fitzroy, near the member's riding, are among my ministry's best contributions to the province and provincial parks piece.

This budget's investments in parks, along with a balanced approach to service fees, ensure that parks' operations are sustainable for future generations.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, the government's rationing of health care has created a crisis in Ontario. Last week in London, 22 mental health patients were left waiting for beds. They were placed in a classroom because there was no space. Guelph's emergency room was shut down when 11 mental health patients required in-patient admission but the hospital had nowhere to place them.

Mental health patients deserve the same care as physical health patients. Why are you failing our mentally ill across this province by failing to deal with the crisis in our health care system today? Minister, will you stand up and stop rationing the health care system?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm not exactly sure how a \$1-billion new investment in our health care system can be described as anything at all in relationship to what the member opposite is alleging.

I think he was in the Legislature last week when we talked about the situation in London, where I reminded the members of the Legislature of the new investment of more than \$1 million in capital, as well as the operating budget, to develop a brand new crisis centre for mental health patients in London and in the Middlesex area.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to make these important investments. I would hope that the member would, again, acknowledge that often it is in the community, with strong community supports, where the best outcomes are achieved. It's not necessarily in the hospital.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the minister: I was here last week when your government turned your back on everybody suffering from rare diseases.

The situation worsened over the weekend. Pete Verberne, who suffers from Alzheimer's, spent eight nights sleeping on the Victoria hospital floor while in restraints because there were no beds or enough front-line health care professionals to look after him.

Your government has had many photo ops promoting mental health support, but the government is failing terribly. The health care system is being rationed because of your government's financial mismanagement. Over \$2 billion have been wasted on eHealth, \$26.9 million on a diabetes registry and billions more on Ornge. Could you only think of the mental health services we could have in our province if you hadn't wasted that money?

Minister, will you stop the waste and rationing and look after our most vulnerable, who are slipping through the cracks of your mismanaged health care system?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** The billion-dollar increase to our health care system includes many important investments, whether they be in palliative care and hospice care, whether they be in mental health—an additional multi-million-dollar investment in mental health services in this province—or whether they be the capital investments of \$12 billion over the next 10 years.

We've had an independent study by ICES which has shown that the reforms that we're making are having a positive impact: a shorter length of stay in hospital, increased numbers of patients treated, minimal impact on re-admission rates, and, importantly, a statistically significant reduction in nurse-sensitive adverse events. That's important because that's about the safety of our front-line health care workers. The evidence shows that our reforms, our transformation, and our quality agenda over the past few years are making an important and positive impact.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Liberal cuts to health care are hurting patients in Hamilton. Hamilton Health Sciences is cutting nearly 100 full-time positions, St. Joe's is cutting 136 positions, and mental health services are being moved out of my riding and out of east Hamilton. Those services are a lifeline for people in need, but now the whole east side of Hamilton will be without psychiatric care. Patients will be asked to take the bus for an extra hour each way to the remaining facility on Hamilton Mountain. These additional burdens of time and money will only discourage patients from getting the help they need.

Will the minister explain to us why this government is making it harder for people in east Hamilton to get the mental health care they require?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I first want to address the comments made at the beginning of the member's question with regard to Hamilton Health Sciences generally. We do know that they reviewed 230 different options for finding efficiencies and for staying within their allocation. They decided on a number of those options. Of more than 200, they decided on a handful of them. It does result in some job losses, approximately 90, but almost 50 of those are unfilled positions, so the true number is closer to between 40 and 50. The Ontario Nurses' Association says that only a "very small number" of the affected jobs at HHS are in nursing. There are non-union positions which are being removed as a result of this change.

I think we need to recognize that we need to give the tools to our hospitals to make the changes they deem necessary to provide the best-quality patient care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Interesting. RNs, RPNs, social workers, child care workers, technologists and lab staff and many other workers are all threatened by cuts at St. Joseph's, and they know the impact that this will have on

their community. The closure of East Region Mental Health Services is a body blow to my riding, which is the second-poorest in Ontario.

Poverty breeds poor health, including mental health. This clinic exists to provide community-based support. Instead, we're asking people to travel an hour each way out of their community to get help. Gary Birch from Binbrook contacted my office and pointed out that these patients have reached a mental or financial state such that they can only access a mental health service that is near them. They will not venture very far, yet this government is telling them to hit the road.

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This pattern of short-term cuts with long-term costs and consequences is the hallmark of this Liberal government, and it is occurring across our province. How long will patients in Hamilton have to suffer just because the Liberal government can't get its priorities straight?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** My understanding is that this is one of the changes that St. Joseph's is contemplating to its mental health system. Of course we know that on the Mountain there is a more than \$1-billion investment in the mental health services that provide support to people not just from Hamilton but for the entire region.

We need to also acknowledge the importance of moving those programs, services and supports out into the community. We've been doing that through an investment of \$20 million over six years in the Medical Psychiatry Alliance, which is going to provide tens of thousands of individuals better access to mental health services.

I'm surprised that the member doesn't talk about the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team that's set up in Hamilton, which has ride-alongs of mental health workers with our police officers so that if there is a mental health crisis involving somebody who otherwise would end up in the justice system, they get involved. They often divert away from hospitals to begin with, to provide the important community supports that also keep that person out of prison.

#### CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

This budget made significant investments to help children and youth across the province. Many families in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora are glad to hear that we will be providing \$333 million in new funding for autism services. I think often of the parents and children with autism who come to see me, and the challenges and struggles they face each day. I'm sure they'll support this government's additional investments for children and youth with special needs.

Can the minister please inform the House of the important investments her ministry is making to support Ontario's children?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for this very excellent question.



He's absolutely right: The new investments that have been mentioned are very, very good news for children, youth and families in Ontario. This year's budget increases the children and youth budget by 2.1%, and this is very, very good news for families across the province.

As mentioned, we're investing \$330 million in new funds to support children and youth with autism. We've worked really hard with the experts to develop a plan for new funding, and we'll be announcing those details shortly. We've also invested an additional \$17.8 million for children with special needs, which is just part of the nearly half a billion dollars we provide to support children with special needs and their families across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.  
**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'd like to thank the minister for her answer.

These investments will certainly make a difference in the lives of my constituents, particularly those caring for children with special needs or autism. The overall increase for the budget of her ministry of 2.1% is impressive and certainly money well spent. I'm happy that I'll be able to report this good news to my community.

I also imagine that these new investments are being well received more broadly. Can the minister please explain how people are responding to the initiatives she has just mentioned?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member again for the question. He's absolutely right. I'm very pleased to report that our investments in children and youth are being well received and supported by stakeholders in the sector. For example, Margaret Spoelstra, the executive director of Autism Ontario, said, "Families raising children with autism have been waiting a long time this announcement.... This investment will set the stage for continuous learning for years to come."

The leader of the official opposition called our investments "appropriate" and well received, and he also recognized that the \$17.8 million for special needs is "a step in the right direction." The NDP member for Kitchener–Waterloo called these investments for autism "a positive step." Despite all of that, I'm very disappointed that we've heard that both opposition parties have indicated they will not be supporting our budget and therefore will not be supporting these very important initiatives.

RING OF FIRE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Whenever it is time for the annual Prospectors and Developers Association convention, this government always seems to rediscover the mining sector. But this year in the budget, the only significant mention of the \$60-billion Ring of Fire project was a re-announcement from 2014. The same page in the budget has essentially been copied and pasted for three years. This wouldn't be so disappointing except for the fact that not a single

dollar of these promised infrastructure funds has been used to advance the project.

Will the minister explain his government's total lack of urgency on developing the Ring of Fire?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you very much for the question. The member knows well what a priority not just the Ring of Fire is but the entire mineral development sector is. That's why the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's conference is such an important gathering. Yes, indeed, we are very proud of our continued \$1-billion commitment towards the Ring of Fire and we're going to continue our discussions, certainly with the federal government, with the First Nations and with industry as we move forward.

There are important discussions going on that the member well knows about. They're going to lead us forward. They're going to also lead us to other mineral development prospects that we are very, very excited about. The fact that we also have \$120 million that is committed to the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program is also crucial. The fact that we have a record-breaking investment in infrastructure development is also crucial for the mining sector.

So while we see continued challenges to the mining sector, if the member was down at PDAC yesterday he would recognize that, indeed, there is a very positive atmosphere about future development in the mining sector.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: The minister continues to insist that progress is being made, but where's the proof? He just admitted that not a nickel has flowed. In fact, over the past three years alone, you've missed your own government deadlines in every measurable area of the project. The Auditor General used her 2015 report to single out your ministry for its ineffectiveness and inaction.

Speaker, continued talk by this government won't develop the Ring of Fire. If that were the case, we'd already have the 5,500 jobs per year that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce estimates will be created by the project.

Why can't this government get anything right, especially on a project as important as the Ring of Fire?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The mic wasn't on. Finish, please.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows full well, we are doing very, very important work with the Matawa First Nations. We have put a regional framework agreement in place that allows us to move forward with important discussions. The fact is we need to have the communities embracing this development. This is an extraordinary resource development project in a remote part of the province that has never seen development before, so

there are many considerations at play. But what we have is positive development moving forward in terms of that regional framework agreement, including discussions about regional infrastructure development, about resource revenue sharing, about socio-economic supports, and that's again why we are so encouraged by our relationship with the new federal government.

I had an opportunity to see a number of ministers yesterday and a number of federal members yesterday, and there was great eagerness in continuing those discussions. We are going to move forward on this project as we are on so many projects in terms of the mining sector. We're excited about it. We're going to stay positive. We sure wish you would as well because, at the end of the day, we are going to see a great development in northern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Attorney General. Tomorrow is International Women's Day, but in Ontario, instead of moving forward, women have been made more vulnerable by the Liberal government's decision to cut funding to Partner Assault Response. If this government was serious about ending domestic violence, it would recognize the need to hold abusive partners responsible for changing their violent behaviours.

Last week, a provincial survey revealed that almost half of Ontario men believe that victims are to blame if they stay in an abusive relationship. Does the Liberal government support this view? And if not, why is the Attorney General cutting funding for PAR, the only government program for men who abuse?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** This program, PAR, is a very important component of our government's plan to end violence against women. I wanted to say to the public that this government has increased money into this program. In 2014-15, more than 11,000 offenders were referred to this program. We are committed to collaborating with stakeholders on ways to further improve PAR.

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I have listened to stakeholder concerns about the program, and some service providers are concerned with declines in referral rates and the data the government relies on to determine funding allocation. My ministry took these concerns into consideration and has adjusted the funding allocation for 2016-17 in order to minimize the impact on agencies. So we have not reduced—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** The minister knows that overall PAR funding has been cut, as much as 50% for the Windsor PAR Program and 25% in Elgin. These cuts came after the Premier stood in this House on December 2 and declared that there are no cuts to PAR.

Why did the minister ignore the calls of violence-against-women experts and front-line agencies to halt any further changes to PAR? Why did she ignore the Premier, who said there would be no changes to PAR allocations, and instead cut the 2016 allocations for PAR provider agencies?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Our government's annual investment in the PAR Program has increased by 47%, from \$7.2 million in 2004-05 to \$10.6 million in 2015-16.

There is a concern about this program. We've listened to the concerns. We will be convening a stakeholder meeting on April 20, 2016, with all of our PAR providers, violence-against-women stakeholders and experts to discuss concerns about the program and also hear their ideas for improvement. We've always wanted to improve the efficiency of the program, and we will continue to listen to the stakeholders.

### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as we all know, the number of Ontario seniors aged 65 and over is projected to more than double to over 4.5 million, or 25% of the population, by 2041. With that growth, we know that an increasing number of our parents and grandparents may one day require specialized care provided by one of the province's long-term-care facilities.

We also know that, as this demand for long-term care increases, organizations like the Ontario Long Term Care Association are telling us that the number of long-term-care residents coming into care with cognitive impairments has increased significantly, with more than 60% of the residents in our long-term-care homes currently having Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. As more and more families in my riding are turning their thoughts toward the care their parents and grandparents may need in the future, I would like to reassure them that their loved ones will continue the highest level of care.

Minister, can you please tell this House about the new funding and how it will be used to provide the highest level of care for our loved ones?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Let me begin by thanking the member from Brampton-Springdale for this important question and her ongoing advocacy for seniors in her riding.

The member is absolutely right: Over the last decade, we have seen an increase in the instances of people with dementia entering long-term care exhibiting what are called "responsive" behaviours, such as aggression, wandering and agitation. That's why long-term care is one of the areas where the Ministry of Health has consistently been increasing funding, and this year is no exception. In fact, this year we are providing exceptional funding to the long-term-care sector, including a 2% increase across the board to every single long-term-care home in Ontario for the personal care needs of residents, but more



importantly, we are also increasing our investment in Behavioural Supports Ontario by \$10 million.

I have to say this, Mr. Speaker, if the opposition is really serious about—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, you don't. Supplementary?

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** Minister, that's wonderful news. The residents of my riding, I'm sure, will be happy to know how important a priority the safety of our loved ones is for you and for your ministry.

But, Minister, I know you're responsible for the well-being of Ontarians, and I know that making Ontario smoke-free is a goal that you're quite passionate about. I know smoking prevalence has decreased from 24.5% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2014, representing 408,000 fewer smokers. As a member of this government, I'm proud to say that Ontario has the third-lowest smoking rate in the country.

But, Mr. Speaker, the use of tobacco products remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. More than two million Ontarians still smoke, and thousands of youth still take up smoking every year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House what our government announced in the budget last week to help us continue striving towards the goal of Ontario achieving the lowest smoking rate in the country?

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

As the minister responsible for health and wellness in Ontario, I'm very proud to continue the legacy of protecting Ontarians, especially young Ontarians, from the harmful effects of tobacco. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to announce to this House that we're going to increase funding for smoking cessation by \$5 million if this budget is passed.

Whether it's long-term care or whether it's health promotion, this government is increasing funding. This is what I have to say to the opposition: If they're really serious about supporting our seniors, instead of asking sanctimonious questions in this House, I would ask that they stand up and support this budget. Talk is cheap, but they have the opportunity to really support seniors by standing up for this budget.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, why are you allowing Metrolinx to give away millions of taxpayers' dollars in grants?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member, as I always do, for the question.

It was unfortunate I didn't hear the last part of the question, Speaker. I understand it was about Metrolinx and the tremendous work that Metrolinx is doing right

now to make sure we continue to build the province up and continue to invest in transit.

There are long lists of items, Speaker, since 2003, on which the team at Metrolinx and GO Transit have worked very hard. For example, since 2003, we have built 14 new stations. We have rebuilt four existing GO stations. We have extended our rail network by more than 90 kilometres since 2003. We've added more than 31,000 parking spots across the network. We've added over 200 new railcars and over 150 new single-level buses, and over 250 double-decker buses will be added over the next five years. This will support communities right across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, including Kitchener-Waterloo, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Speaker, it was only recently that Metrolinx was wrapped up in a scandal, when it made public that they were using taxpayer dollars to sponsor TIFF and Buffalo Bills games in Toronto in a deal where staff were given free tickets.

Today, we've learned that Metrolinx has operated outside their mandate once again by giving away millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in grants. Scandal after scandal, and you still haven't learned your lesson: UP Express has empty trains, there are sheds too small for their electric trains at Union Station, and now we have this slush fund.

Metrolinx's sole job should be to plan, build and manage transit, and it's the minister's job to provide the necessary oversight and transparency.

Speaker, how much more taxpayer money do we have to watch Metrolinx toss away before they finally do something about it?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** From my perspective, I appreciate, again, the member's follow-up question.

I understand that there were changes that were made by my predecessor more than a couple of years ago, Speaker, with respect to some of the concerns the member opposite is raising with respect to Metrolinx not only having that clear mandate but also, frankly, delivering on that mandate.

There are a couple of other items I didn't mention earlier. For example, other recent investments include:

—14 new weekday train trips added on the Kitchener GO corridor between the Mount Pleasant GO station and Union Station during off-peak midday hours;

—new and enhanced GO bus service that is being added in the Milton, Highway 407, Barrie, Lakeshore and Stouffville corridors;

—the opening of the West Harbour GO station last June, in time for the Pan and Parapan Am Games; and

—announcing the extension of GO Transit service on the Lakeshore West GO line to a new GO station at Centennial Parkway in Stoney Creek.

The list goes on and on.

This is a government and this is a Premier that are committed to building the province up. I would expect that member to support our—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

Just a comment for those who continue to seek, from the Speaker, advice on whether or not an answer is satisfactory: I don't have the authority, but I'm going to make it clear to you that I will deal with people who are not dealing with policy. After that, it's up to them to decide how to answer their questions. Just remember that.

New question.

#### FOOD SAFETY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique.

Speaker, today marks a really, really sad day. It is the first anniversary of the train derailment, the explosion and the oil spill in Gogama in my riding. The residents woke up at about 3 a.m. the morning of March 7 to a wall of flame that turned the sky orange and to the smell of burning oil.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has been extremely quiet while the people of Gogama are seeing their real estate prices tank and are concerned about their environment, their food and the water quality. The situation is bleak. This is the biggest train derailment in the history of Ontario, yet no amount of troubled suffering seems to trigger a response from this government.

The people of Gogama want to know when the minister will commit to standing up for them and answer a simple question: Are the fish caught in the Makami River safe to eat? Yes or no?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are very, very concerned about the folks in Gogama who have now seen not one but two train derailments with CN. This is a standard of safety we do not think is acceptable, and I and the Minister of Transportation have raised this issue with the government responsible in Canada—that's the federal government. As the member knows—I appreciate her leadership and her work on this and the sincerity of her question—we have been trying to get the federal government to do its job in this area. Under the previous government, we got very little progress.

My ministry has done something it hasn't done before: It has taken the fish and has been testing them themselves. This is not normally what we do in our labs. It's not a provincial responsibility, but we got so fed up and so frustrated with inaction that we took those actions. I'm hoping that my legislative assistant is hearing me and will rush over those results before the end of question period for me.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Simcoe-Grey on a point of order.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, point of order: During question period today, in response to our leader, Patrick Brown, the Minister of the Environment claimed that the PC climate change policy would cost an additional \$160 a tonne. Would the minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. First, that is not a point of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm trying to rule here, please.

First, that's not a point of order. Second, any member has, at any time, the ability—not quite any time if it's question period—to correct their own record. I thank you for that.

#### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to take a moment to re-engage the House along with my deputy Speakers. We've had this discussion and I want to redirect the idea that you're speaking to the Chair. Please, if you need some lessons or if you need some guidance, the table is always willing to do that. It does not help the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd like to finish.

It does not help the debate by moving into finger-pointing at individuals, telling them what they have to do. It actually escalates things. So if you're going to help in this place, direct your questions and comments to the Chair. The deputies have been advised and they're going to be working on that. If you need some help, the table has indicated that sometimes it's very difficult to speak in the third person, so do so by speaking in the first person to the Chair and design your questions and answers around that, please.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Arriving shortly in the members' gallery will be Khushali Shah and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Shah. Khushali will be a page in the next session. She is here to tour the House and get familiar with her surroundings. She's excited to be here in two short weeks.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Doing her homework.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** March is Pharmacist Awareness Month. It's the perfect time to celebrate the important part pharmacists play in our health care system. This year, the Ontario Pharmacists Association is encouraging everyone to "Know Your Pharmacist."

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals. The majority provide services and consultations without the need of an appointment.

This government needs to utilize the abilities of pharmacists and expand their current scope of practice.



Pharmacists are willing and able to work with this government to find cost savings in the health care system, and this can be derived through an expanded scope of practice. Pharmacists are an integral part of our health care system. We should be using their abilities, knowledge and community connection to create a collaborative, cost-efficient health care system.

For the second budget in a row, this government has announced that they may expand pharmacists' scope of practice to include travel injections. This government has been big on announcements but very slow on action.

I've been a pharmacist for over 20 years, and I'm proud of my profession. It's a pleasure to stand up here today to recognize the great work of pharmacists across the province. I encourage everyone to take a moment to celebrate and get to know your pharmacist.

### ANIMAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** We've seen this before: OSPCA was going to euthanize 100 dogs just because they had ringworm. We fought them; we won. Now they're going to euthanize 21 dogs that were the victims of a dogfighting ring, despite evidence to the contrary and adoptive families all over the place who are willing to take them in. Michael Vick's dogs, we remember, were all rehomed but one. It's because of this draconian, breed-specific legislation that this government still insists on upholding that that's coming to pass. Legal challenges abound.

It's not just dogs, Mr. Speaker; it's lions. A lion was shot by an owner of a roadside zoo. Why? Because we have absolutely no oversight over roadside zoos. This government, again, has overlooked two private members' bills—two and counting—about that very fact, and has done nothing. And Kiska the orca is still at Marineland.

From this side of the aisle, all I can say is that somebody has to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves. If that falls to us, then we're proud to uphold that in the New Democratic Party because, absolutely, there's a home and a place for every animal. Being euthanized as victims of a dogfighting ring is not the way to go.

### MEMBER'S NEWSLETTER

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I have the privilege of alerting my own residents in Etobicoke North. I know that my mother is watching right now as well as my youngest son, who is two and a half, so a salute to them. I alert my colleagues, residents, family members and everyone—the great supporters in Etobicoke North—of the impending excellent newsletter that is about to be mailed to 50,000 residents in my riding.

I'd like to, first of all, thank my excellent staff—Peter Murphy, Kosta Chialtas and Palvinder Singh—for their help in compiling the many facts that are embedded in this newsletter, which include highlights from the budget. Particularly of interest to my area is free university and

college tuition for families earning income annually of \$50,000 or less. This is, by the way, part and parcel of the \$90-million infrastructure project that we just authorized and celebrated at Humber College, north campus.

We have many other items. Of course, as you'll know, Speaker, as part of the \$1.2-billion expansion of the Finch LRT, we have eight—count them: eight—new stops coming to the great riding of Etobicoke North. They are Humber College, Highway 27, Westmore, Martin Grove, Albion, Stevenson, Kipling, and Islington. This government is on the move for Etobicoke North, paralleling the member himself.

There are many, many things to talk about, including a \$200-million expansion at Etobicoke General Hospital, and more.

### JAMES GILLIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today, I'd like to recognize Dr. James Gillies, who was born in Teeswater in 1924 to Dr. Midford Gillies and his wife, Gladys. In fact, I use Mr. Gillies's home as a landmark to help people find the 6th of Culross so they can make their way to our farm.

But back to James: James had an immense impact in the worlds of academia, business and politics. When James was 17, he attended the University of Western Ontario, where he majored in economics until World War II broke out and he joined the RCAF as an air crewman. Afterwards, he returned to finish his degree and would continue his academic career in the United States.

In 1965, after serving as assistant dean at UCLA, he returned to Ontario to work at York University as the founding dean of the faculty of administrative studies, now the Schulich School of Business. Today, the school has grown to more than 27,000 graduates, working in more than 90 countries worldwide and is a testament to the far-reaching and lasting effect Mr. Gillies's legacy has had 50 years later.

In 1972, Mr. Gillies found himself on the campaign trail and was elected to his first term as the representative for the riding of Don Valley at the federal level. He would go on to serve a second term. He also ran for the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party, but ultimately backed Joe Clark in the end.

After serving as senior policy adviser to Prime Minister Joe Clark, he returned to the world of academics and was awarded the Order of Canada for his contributions to education.

But with all his achievements, Mr. Gillies was happiest to be known as just a boy from Teeswater who had a chance to make a difference.

### CAMP EAGLE NEST

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Today, I rise to draw attention to Camp Eagle Nest, a First Nation non-profit organization located about two hours north of Sudbury, near the Benny Forest in my riding, in Nickel Belt. Camp Eagle Nest organizes cultural and wilderness skills training

camps for young people, mainly aboriginal youth from around the north.

The future was looking bright for Camp Eagle Nest until logging operations were started in the Benny Forest. Unknown to the local residents, the 2010-2020 Spanish Forest phase 2 forest management plan had not taken into account the residents and businesses operating in the area and the area was given up for logging. Camp Eagle Nest was simply overlooked, Speaker.

I understand that sometimes mistakes happen, but it is up to the Ministry of Natural Resources to own up to their mistake.

The area has a strong aboriginal history. Clyde McNichol, a First Nation elder from Camp Eagle Nest, has centuries-long family ties to the area. With his wife, Barbara McNichol, they are trying to protect the trees in the area of his ancestral home and current business from lumbering.

Forestry and related activities in the area have significantly infringed on Mr. McNichol's right to hunt, fish and gather. They now threaten his ability to use his camp for spiritual and cultural practices, including teaching traditional knowledge to youth.

Mr. Speaker, the government and the MNR should admit the mistake and start trying to fix it.

#### WESTERN MISSISSAUGA

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Last summer, Dun and Bradstreet showed us in precise numbers that our western Mississauga neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville led the city of Mississauga, the province of Ontario and the country of Canada in business growth and employment growth.

Manufacturing has grown by more than 44% in northwest Mississauga, 15 percentage points higher than the rest of the province and the rest of the country. Employment in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville is up 21% since 2014; sales are up 13% in the same period. Since the bottom of the recession in 2009, the number of businesses in the riding has grown an astonishing 64%.

Homegrown aerospace manufacturing heavyweight Cyclone Manufacturing is growing at 20% per year. Multinational life sciences businesses Amgen, GSK, Contract Pharmaceuticals, Roche Canada and Patheon are bringing home high-wage, high-skilled, full-time, challenging and interesting career opportunities.

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Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville are now a larger population and economic region than the province of PEI or the city of Kingston.

Ontario's economic plan has worked for us in western Mississauga. Ontario's 2016-17 budget will do the same for communities all across Ontario.

#### MAPLE SYRUP

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** In Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Sarnia-Lambton and across Ontario, the first crop of the year is being harvested. Over \$50 million of maple

syrup is produced in our province annually, and I'm proud to have many producers in my riding. These are mostly family-owned businesses that contribute not only to the local economy but also to our communities.

Pancake breakfasts in local churches and community centres, tours through sugar bushes and, of course, many maple syrup festivals all bring families and school classes out to enjoy the warm weather and some delicious maple syrup. It is a uniquely Canadian tradition.

I want to congratulate Fort Rose Maple Co., McLachlan Family Maple Syrup, Williamson Farms, the Lumsden Brothers, Eagleson Farms, Rolling Ridge, Ryan's Sweet Maple, Stanley and Clara Wortner, and Earl and Bill Elgie, all from my riding, in what is shaping up to be another great season.

Kate, Annie and I always look forward to this time of year. I encourage everyone to visit their local sugar bush or maple syrup festival to learn more about this quintessential part of Ontario's heritage.

#### ROYAL OTTAWA INSPIRATION AWARDS

**Mr. John Fraser:** On Friday night, I was pleased to attend the Royal Ottawa Inspiration Awards Gala that celebrates the exceptional individuals who have contributed to advancing the cause of mental health in our community and beyond.

At the gala, we honoured and celebrated:

—Gayle Grass, author of *Iris the Dragon*, a series of children's books aimed at starting conversations about mental health;

—psychiatrist Dr. Abigail Ortiz, who is researching mood fluctuations in patients suffering from depression and bipolar disorder, with the goal of being able to predict and prevent major manic and depressive episodes;

—men's health advocate Jean-François Claude, who has campaigned for men's mental health day as an annual lead-up to Father's Day;

—peer support worker and educator Tyrone Gamble, who has drawn on his own experience with bipolar disorder and psychosis to help others;

—Ruth Maxwell, a champion advocate and fundraiser for mental health in our community;

—and Jason Fam, a student who uses his own experience with PTSD to educate others.

We also honoured Margaret Trudeau for her efforts to break down the stigma that often surrounds mental health.

All of these individuals display courage and conviction, and I want to thank all of them for inspiring us.

#### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I want to rise today to highlight the importance of page 71 of this year's budget. The line I most enjoy reads: "Subject to agreement with freight rail partners ... extension of GO rail service to Niagara and Bowmanville."



Now, while I'm thrilled for the members from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls for this news, I am overjoyed for the residents of Durham and all the wonderful things that it means for our wonderful community. The residents of my riding have been asking for this extension for quite some time, and I am proud that their hard work may pay off now.

I have been working tirelessly to make sure their voices are heard. The Minister of Transportation knows this well. I am glad that we are moving forward with a project that we know will bring access to growth in Courtice and Bowmanville and the Durham region in general.

I look forward to a future agreement with our freight rail partners, and I thank the residents of Durham for bringing me to Queen's Park to champion this project, which I will continue to do.

## PETITIONS

### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) is outdated, ineffective and the provincial government needs to conduct a review of the entire system;

"Whereas many families are either paying too much in child support or receiving too little, due to the ineffectiveness of the system;

"Whereas families are forced to become their own caseworkers to investigate information that is required by the Family Responsibility Office before they can enforce action;

"Whereas many of the federal and provincial databases do not link up, causing misinformation which affects the money paid or owed in child support for many families;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We call on the provincial government to strike an all-party supported select committee to conduct a review of the practices of the Family Responsibility Office to improve and streamline the collection of child support in the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

### LEAMINGTON KETCHUP

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to introduce a petition signed by hundreds of Ontarians, entitled "Put Leamington Ketchup on the Table at Queen's Park."

*Applause.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas supporting the agri-food industry is good economics, good environmental policy and social practice;

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature has a rich history of promoting Ontario products such as craft beer, Ontario wine, fruits and vegetables; and

"Whereas the ketchup being served in the dining room and cafeteria at Queen's Park is currently not an Ontario product; and

"Whereas French's ketchup proudly uses tomatoes grown in Leamington, Ontario; and

"Whereas the promotion of French's ketchup would greatly support local tomato producers, local workers and communities across Essex county;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Speaker direct the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as part of its procurement policy, to direct Dana Hospitality to exclusively serve Leamington French's ketchup."

I know there's an appetite for a petition of this sort here in the chamber. I want to thank all those who signed the petition and I send it to the Clerk's table.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I wish I could comment—but I'm not.

### LUNG HEALTH

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it and leave it with page Erin.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000" emergency department "visits and experiences in excess of 33,000" ED "visits annually; and

"Whereas the government-implemented Places to Grow Act forecasts massive population growth in New Tecumseth, which along with the aging population will only intensify the need for the redevelopment of the hospital; and

"Whereas all other hospital emergency facilities are more than 45 minutes away with no public transit available between those communities; and

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals; 1320

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area."

I agree with the petition and certainly will sign it.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and will send the petition down with page Delaney.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition sent to me by some of my Mississauga dentists. It's entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water," and it reads as follows:

"Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

"Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I'm very pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Suzanne.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** I have this petition that was collected by the people in Thunder Bay. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

"Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, to be attended to for" toileting, feeding etc.;

"Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province" varies greatly, is inconsistent and unregulated;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident ... to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);



“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January” of next year;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I thank the people of Thunder Bay. I will ask Jessie to bring it to the Clerk.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I agree with this, I’m glad to pass on the support, and I’ll give it to page Laura.

### CAREGIVERS

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 2.6 million caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour in Ontario;

“Whereas these caregivers work hard to provide care to those that are most in need even though their efforts are often overlooked;

“Whereas one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago;

“Whereas without these caregivers, the health care system and patients would greatly suffer in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP Gélinas’s bill to proclaim the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day to increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers in Ontario.”

I am going to sign my name to this petition and give it to page Tristan.

### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas demonstrative schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special education needs; and

“Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstrative schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and hiring of teacher staff;

“Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstrative schools and other essential support services;

“Whereas the freezing of student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind;

“Whereas the situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstrative schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Bianca Nicole.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I have a petition here from people across Durham region. Specifically, Sharon Broadbent has put her name to this. It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I am pleased to affix my name to this and send it with page Julia.

### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I have a petition here that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

"Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians."

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Sayeem.

## HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

**1330**

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

It's signed by people from all over my riding: Coboconk, Lindsay, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Burnt River, Oakwood and Omeme. I present it to page Jordan.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Ms. MacCharles moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I look to the minister to lead off the debate at third reading.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** This afternoon I'll be sharing my time with the member from Brampton-Springdale as well as the member for Kitchener Centre.

I am very pleased to rise today to say a few words about the third reading of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2016. As my contribution to this important debate, I do want to look at the desire of Ontarians to end sexual violence and harassment, and the real progress we are making toward that goal. Since that day in December 2014 when Premier Wynne called for the development of an action plan to end sexual violence and harassment, Ontario has been on a journey of discovery and progress.

Il y avait du bon travail contre la violence et le harcèlement à caractère sexuel, mais on avait besoin d'un nouveau dévouement avec le but d'éliminer la violence contre les femmes.

The Premier's announcement succeeded in bringing the topic out of the shadows and into the broad light of day. We needed to start that conversation. When we did, it turned out that many Ontarians were unsure about what constitutes sexual violence and harassment, many survivors were unsure about their legal options and supports in the community, and many institutions in our province needed stronger policies to deal with the issue. Our government got to work and the result was our three-year, \$41-million Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, which our government launched one year ago. This plan is called It's Never Okay.

I can sum up the Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment in a general way by saying that we will be helping to change deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours; we'll also provide more training for professionals in many sectors to provide better support for survivors; we'll improve supports for survivors who come forward about abuse and we'll make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints.

Since the action plan was launched last March, the focus has shifted to implementing it's 13 key recommendations. I am very pleased to report that we've made great progress and we are building great momentum. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is investing more than \$1.1 million a year for the next three years in hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres. This investment will enhance specialized counselling services and community outreach for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. The Ministry of the Attorney General is providing an additional \$1.7 million per year in funding for the province's 42 sexual assault centres so that they can enhance services for survivors. And to underscore the importance of student



safety and learning, the government announced over \$2 million in funding to support seven public education projects across Ontario's education sectors. This funding includes five public education projects that specifically target post-secondary campuses.

One of the goals of our action plan is to engage Ontarians in the discussion about how to stop sexual violence and harassment by encouraging them to undertake initiatives that will help change attitudes and inspire behavioural change. To that end, Ontario has launched a \$2.25-million Creative Engagement Fund. Administered by the Ontario Arts Council, the Creative Engagement Fund will partner with artists in provoking dialogue and action on issues such as sexual consent, rape culture and misogyny. The projects may include all forms of artistic expression, such as performance, writing, music, photography, theatre, videos, online engagement, installation, painting, graffiti arts, murals, visual arts, and indigenous art.

We also launched a \$3-million innovation fund to test new approaches to improving supports to survivors of sexual violence and harassment. Funded projects will be announced in the spring, and they will test new or innovative approaches to support survivors of sexual violence and harassment, while building a body of evidence about what works to improve service delivery outcomes. Up to 15% of the fund is available to support indigenous organizations to develop projects.

We know that we cannot stop sexual violence and harassment overnight. We know that it will take a generational shift to end deep-rooted misogynistic attitudes and behaviours.

Speaker, students arriving on campus last fall benefited from a \$2-million action plan commitment to provide information about preventing sexual violence and harassment during their first week of classes, during orientation week, and throughout the rest of the academic year. That was important to me personally, too, because my twin children both started post-secondary education this academic year at Carleton University.

Another key part of Ontario's action plan is an updated health and physical education curriculum. This enhanced curriculum is helping students to gain a deeper understanding of gender equality, healthy relationships and consent.

When a survivor of sexual violence or harassment reaches out for help, service providers need to be ready. The government is also investing more than \$1.7 million in training for front-line workers.

Speaker, over the past year, our government announced that the Ontario network of sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres would receive an additional \$1.1 million annually to better support survivors.

A key part of our action plan was an award-winning public education campaign aimed at young people ages 18 to 29. The first phase of this multimedia, multilingual campaign was launched last year on the same day as the action plan, and it's called *It's Never Okay*. The

campaign was built around the Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp and was aimed at bystanders who witness sexual violence or harassment, urging them to come forward and help survivors. Although the campaign is aimed at youth, the universal message is that we all have a role to play in ending gender-based violence. That includes everyone here in this Legislature, Speaker. So far, the TV ads have had well over 2.5 million views on YouTube, and that's just in English. Altogether, our Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp has reached more than 85 million people, not only in Ontario, but around the world, and the ONgov Facebook posts reached over 1.9 million. The video was viewed over seven million times within the first 10 days, and the total #WhoWillYouHelp tweets have exceeded 40,000.

Research conducted in 2015 by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the government of Ontario indicates that, months later, two thirds of Ontarians surveyed recalled seeing the campaign. Furthermore, the campaign is still having an impact on attitudes and behaviours.

Speaker, phase 2 of the public education campaign was launched by the Premier at the Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment in November of last year, once again with a thought-provoking video aimed at young adults aged 18 to 29. This ad campaign aimed to help Ontarians identify sexual violence and harassment when it happens, so that they're able to step in and help. We commissioned a study by Ipsos Reid which showed that while most Ontarians believe they have an obligation to intervene if they witness sexual violence, many Ontarians are still unsure whether certain behaviours constitute sexual violence or harassment.

#### 1340

It's apparent that we all have work to do to change long-held misconceptions and attitudes about what constitutes sexual violence and harassment. The Twitter hashtag for the new part of the public education campaign is #ItsNeverOkay, because it is never okay when one in three women will experience violence in her lifetime. It's never okay that 460,000 sexual assaults take place in Canada each and every year. It's never okay that for every 1,000 sexual assaults, only 33 are ever reported to the police, only 12 of those result in charges laid, only six are prosecuted and just three lead to a conviction.

All of us here today know that sexual violence is never okay. I'm confident that if the House votes passage of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015, Ontario will take another huge step towards stopping sexual violence in the province.

Il y a encore du travail à faire. There's more work to do, but we are much closer today than we were one year ago towards a vision of an Ontario, often articulated by our Premier, Premier Wynne, where all people can live without fear, in safety and with dignity and respect.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Brampton–Springdale.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I am pleased to rise today to speak at third reading of the proposed Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. If passed, this legis-

lation would support the right of all Ontarians to feel safe and be safe from sexual violence and harassment in their homes, campuses, workplaces and communities.

Bill 132 is the product of much deliberation and consultation. It was introduced in the House last October and underwent public hearings across the province in the month of January, and finished clause-by-clause review at the Standing Committee on Social Policy on February 29. As a result of the public hearings, several changes were made to Bill 132, which I will reference as I go along today.

The proposed legislation would amend six existing acts, fulfilling commitments made in It's Never Okay, Ontario's sexual violence and harassment action plan, as released in March 2015.

Ending sexual violence and harassment is an urgent priority for our society. One out of three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. This is not okay; it is never okay.

Our government is working hard to address sexual violence and harassment. We announced a three-year, \$41-million action plan almost one year ago. Our plan involves challenging attitudes and raising public awareness, improving supports to survivors and making workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment. Over the past 12 months, we have begun implementing our plan.

This bill is an important part of our action plan. The proposed legislation, if passed, would amend six existing acts, putting the strength of the law behind important ways and means of helping to stop sexual violence and harassment in Ontario and improving supports for survivors.

Bill 132 offers better protection in the workplace. If passed, our legislation would make workplaces safer by amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Every Ontarian deserves the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. Currently, the act requires employers to have a workplace harassment policy and program and to provide information to workers about the contents of the policy and the program. Our proposed changes to the OHSA add a definition of "workplace sexual harassment" to the act, enhance requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and add specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment. This includes the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

At committee, the OHSA schedule of Bill 132 was strengthened. The committee has passed a motion that requires an employer, in consultation with a joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative, to develop and maintain a written program to implement the required policy with respect to workplace harassment.

If passed, Bill 132 would also promote safer campuses. It is also a fact that sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of

35. Our proposed legislation would require every publicly assisted college, university and private career college in Ontario to have a policy—developed with student input and reviewed with student input at least once every three years—addressing sexual violence on campuses.

I know that at public hearings, the Standing Committee on Social Policy heard that the original drafting of Bill 132 was too restrictive. Originally, the legislation required colleges and universities to have a policy that "specifically and solely" addressed sexual violence involving students. I'm glad to hear that Bill 132 has also been amended to strike out "specifically and solely," allowing these institutions the flexibility to determine whether the policy should apply to faculty and staff and others in addition to students. It is excellent that the committee was able to address this feedback from stakeholders. This solution struck the right balance. It gives colleges and universities the flexibility to expand the scope of their sexual violence and harassment policies to include other members of the campus community, but maintains our deliberate and appropriate focus on students.

As I mentioned, incidents of sexual violence disproportionately affect young women, women of university age. It is important that they are able to point to a piece of legislation like Bill 132 and know that the government is taking steps to protect them.

If Bill 132 passes, colleges, universities and private career colleges would be required to report to the minister and/or a superintendent on instances of sexual violence, as well as on initiatives to address sexual violence and their effectiveness.

Another positive outcome of the clause-by-clause process is that Bill 132 has been amended to give the government the power to require colleges, universities and private career colleges to conduct a campus climate survey to measure the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence among college and university students. The bill was also amended at committee to require that every college or university shall provide its board of governors with an annual report on the prevalence of sexual violence on campus and the effectiveness of the institution's supports and services for students facing sexual violence and harassment.

Another important element of Bill 132 is the changes it would make, if passed, to the justice system. This bill would remove barriers for victims of sexual assault in accessing the justice system. It would remove the limitation period for all civil proceedings based on sexual assault, and in certain cases sexual misconduct or assault, so that the survivors can bring their civil claims forward whenever they choose to do so.

I know that the committee heard concerns from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association that Bill 132, as it was originally drafted, did not make it clear enough that there would be no limitation period for civil claims against institutional defendants. I am pleased that the committee passed amendments to make it absolutely clear that there



will be no limitation period for civil claims against institutional claimants.

Speaker, time does not heal all wounds, but time does give some survivors the perspective and the distance they need to decide whether or not to confront their perpetrators in civil proceedings. Bill 132, if passed, would eliminate the two-year limitation period for applications based on sexual or domestic violence brought to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Again, we believe that time should be on the side of the survivors, not the perpetrators. Survivors would be able to seek compensation regardless of when the crime occurred.

Bill 132, if passed, would also shorten the time it takes to end a tenancy agreement for people experiencing sexual or domestic violence, to make it easier for survivors to flee abuse. We want to make sure that women in an abusive relationship are able to get away from their abuser more quickly and easily.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who brought a private member's bill forward on this subject when he was an MPP. It's an important element of Bill 132, and he has shown extraordinary leadership on this issue.

Finally, during clause-by-clause, the official opposition brought an excellent amendment to change the definition of "sexual violence" in Bill 132 so that it includes gender identity and gender expression. We are happy to support this change. It reinforces the principle that all Ontarians should be protected against violence related to gender identity or expression.

To conclude, Bill 132 offers safer workplaces, homes and campuses, and a more robust and accessible civil claims process. We need this bill as one of many measures to end sexual violence and harassment. That's our goal, and Bill 132 can help us reach it and bring us closer to the day when all Ontarians feel safe from sexual violence and harassment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I'm pleased to join the discussion on the issue of sexual violence and to add my voice in support of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. This is a very important act that will affect many lives in Ontario.

**1350**

We know that one in three women in Canada will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. You heard my colleague speaking about this. Last year, 7,600 Ontarians reported being sexually assaulted, and we know that 90% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. This is a much bigger issue than police stats tell us.

Bill 132 is a strong step forward to dealing with sexual violence and harassment. The bill is very important to me personally. Last year I had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. In the fall of 2014, there were a number of high-profile media cases that moved the issue of sexual violence and harassment to the front burner—in fact, it boiled over.

While Canadians were talking about this, here in Ontario our government took action with the select committee.

We travelled to nine Ontario communities. We heard from 147 witnesses, survivors, counsellors, those in policing, the judicial system and experts. They shared with us their experiences and their expertise. Based on their feedback, that information served to inform us as we drafted Bill 132.

One critical piece to addressing sexual assault is the role that power plays. The feeling of losing power during and after an assault: This is critically important to addressing the issue of sexual assault. The bill addresses the power dynamics of the workplace by amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include important definitions and increase employer obligations in addressing sexual assault. This support is critical to workers who face harassment by their supervisors or their employer, who feel that there's nowhere to turn or fear that by speaking out, they might lose their job. This bill is for those people because it's never okay.

In my early working career as a young reporter in a newsroom that had very few women—it was mainly full of men—I faced harassment, as did the few women who were in that newsroom, on a daily basis. We had to listen to language that was rude and crude and inappropriate. I remember that in one of the edit suites there was a poster of a nude woman. As strange as this may seem, if you wanted to keep your job you had to put up and shut up.

While our select committee was doing its work last year, I heard from so many women in male-dominated fields like policing, the armed forces, and in factories who reached out to me to share similar stories of what they were facing. Bill 132 will now hold employers responsible for ensuring that all workplaces in Ontario are harassment-free.

The bill addresses the power dynamics in housing by amending the Residential Tenancies Act. Those people who are living in situations where they are subjected to sexual assault in their own homes will be granted greater agency to get out of those homes and away from those who are inflicting violence upon them. An estimated 80% of all sexual assaults happen in the home.

This bill also addresses the power issues of students who are out on their own, often for the first time, not knowing where to turn when they are assaulted at their institution, by ensuring that those schools have policies in place to address issues of sexual assault on campuses. These individuals need to see a clear message from their institutions that it's never okay.

Finally, this bill seeks to improve the power relations with survivors and our legal system by eliminating the limitation period for survivors to report their assaults. This gives survivors the time that they need to come to terms with what has happened to them and to seek justice accordingly. Whether the assault happened last week or last month or last year or last decade, it's never okay.

I'm proud to see that our government is taking action to address sexual violence and to see support from members from all parties on this. Everyone can see the

importance of this bill—that it's for all Ontarians—and to see support for the fulfillment of our commitment under our It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment. As an Ontario legislator and as the mother of a 22-year-old young woman, I will be supporting Bill 132, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to join in the debate on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2015.

I'm going to also share my time with some of my colleagues: the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Which may come back in a second rotation around.

Now that the housekeeping is out of the way, I do want to say from the outset, as we said when it was in second reading debate in the Legislature, that this is an important piece of legislation that we will be supporting. It's very much a long-overdue topic that needs to be addressed legislatively. Bill 132 is a positive step. For far too long, the stigma has made victims and survivors feel embarrassed or ashamed and, worse, guilty.

Some of my colleagues who were with the select committee have spoken and have mentioned the recommendations we have made. That's even another component to address sexual violence and harassment. Some of the recommendations we made from the select committee are in Bill 132, and we appreciate that. Bill 132 does reflect the Premier's commitment to an action plan, and this is the formalized legislation that was brought in to do this. I bring that out because we know there's more that needs to be done and this is certainly a start and a positive step forward. We certainly want an Ontario, and we all need to work together for that Ontario, where we can live free from violence or harassment.

The bill affects six important pieces of legislation that affect our society. We wanted to make some amendments, and some were agreed to by the government, so I do appreciate that and will address that a little later.

We have an article, actually, that came out today, by the Canadian Press, highlighting the crisis that is happening across our country. Many Canadian universities still lack stand-alone sexual assault policies, which are crucial in responding to incidents and supporting victims. Only two dozen of more than 100 universities and colleges have stand-alone policies. Institutions like McGill and the University of British Columbia only began to develop policies after high-profile allegations.

I think we can go back to—I'm losing track of time, but when the Ghomeshi scandal broke and the allegations came, we pushed for the select committee to be brought forward, and it was represented by all parties in the

Legislature. We travelled the province, as my colleague has said, and made recommendations. That also pushed the Premier to bring forward some legislation like we see here today. I'm very pleased that a large part of the bill is about colleges and universities and certainly their policies in relation to sexual violence and harassment. We had made some recommendations to effect that.

Nineteen groups actually expressed concern that—this is from our public hearings, where we went to London and Peterborough, and in Toronto. Nineteen groups expressed concern that the bill addressed only sexual violence involving students, leaving out faculty, staff and others on campus who may find themselves seeking support. It was unfortunate, we felt, and we agreed with those stakeholders or those presenters that it should be amended to include not only students but faculty and staff, and should involve local sexual assault centres in the development and implementation of campus sexual violence policy.

**1400**

As we heard, a campus is not just for students. It's broad; oftentimes the lines are blurred between staff, faculty and students. I know that members of the third party also brought forward some amendments which I'm sure they'll speak to, but along similar lines: an increased campus community, not just for students. The government chose just to have the definition for students, but I'm sure there'll be other opportunities to make better legislation to protect against sexual violence and harassment, both for men and for women.

The fact that society is plagued still with such misogynistic attitudes and really, to some degree, the prevalent rape culture that we have—we have to do more.

In this bill, although we were disappointed that the amendments didn't make any changes to include the bigger campus community—some of the groups that made presentations were Colleges Ontario, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, WomenatthecentrE, and several of our universities, to make those amendments that were brought forward.

We did get an amendment brought forward when we heard in Peterborough a request to change the definition of sexual violence to actually include “gender identity or gender expression” in the definition, after “targeting a person's sexuality.” I was very thankful that the government agreed with that presentation that came forward.

We also want to bring forward that I had made many amendments about the definitions in respect to human trafficking, trying to get it included. The bill is very limited in the sections that affect—I understand; I just want to say this little piece—the compensation for victims. That's one of the pieces of legislation that is being affected: compensation for victims.

I did bring many motions forward to have a definition of human trafficking included in compensation for victims. That wasn't accepted by the government. I know that they are looking at bringing forward some strategy against human trafficking in June, so I'll wait to see that.



I did have a private member's bill a couple of weeks ago that would allow for compensation for victims of human trafficking as well as the ability to sue. I won't get into all the details—but again, highlighting the fact that human trafficking has to be addressed in several pieces of legislation that we have. It's a crisis in Ontario. It's a huge exploitation of children and adults—predominantly women, but I do include men; I'm not excluding that at all. My private member's bill was called Saving the Girl Next Door because, in reality, over 90% of the victims and survivors of human trafficking are Canadian-born, and that has to be addressed by the government.

I will continue to push that issue, for recognition of human trafficking in many pieces of provincial legislation, and I wait to see what the government brings through in June.

Certainly the pieces of legislation that were passed by all parties on human trafficking in the Legislature—my motion for a provincial networking task force, with police, crown attorneys and victims' services, the government could do any time. Also, the amendments I made a couple of weeks ago to protect a victim further could be done at any time by the government, so I encourage them to do that.

I do have a couple of my colleagues who are going to speak about what changes they'd like to see with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I know that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had brought forward a bill that would keep victims of violent crime safe by compelling offenders to sign their certificates before being released back into the community. Electronic monitoring would also be required for offenders convicted of sexual or domestic assault.

I know that Senator Runciman, who chairs the legal and constitutional affairs committee, is currently studying the issue of court delays, and that provincial jails are backlogged with offenders awaiting a bail decision or trial. Electronic monitoring can help provide public safety and relieve the congestion in our court system and save significant tax dollars, but it is also another protection for the victims of domestic violence that we have in the province. That predominantly—I know my colleagues are going to follow up with this—affects women in rural Ontario because of geography, poor cellphone service, the minimum number of probation officers that they have to watch these violent offenders. We have to do better, and those suggestions that were brought forward by my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke actually need to be enforced now, and the government can make those changes right now.

I know that Bill 132, as I said, is a great step forward. We're all supporting it. We didn't get some of our amendments through that I mentioned—but there's still much that needs to be done in this province of Ontario to protect women and men from sexual violence and harassment.

I'm going to share my time with my other colleagues; first, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure to join this third reading debate on Bill 132 this afternoon. I want to commend my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I was allowed to join her on the committee that did the committee hearings after second reading on this bill. I also want to commend the members of the government side and the member for London West.

I was really, really impressed with the work of the committee, and I want to particularly say about my colleague—not that I've got any problem with the government members, but I was sitting on the other side with my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for London West, and I really appreciate the passion with which these two members dealt with this issue. It's a challenging, difficult issue, and I really appreciate the passion. If we're going to get rid of these kinds of heinous crimes and acts in our society, it's going to take some passion, because it's been here for generations and we've made little progress over the years—little progress.

Forty years ago, we were talking about sexual harassment and sexual violence—maybe not to the extent we are today, but we are still talking about it today, and you have to ask yourself, why has it taken so long to change the cultural attitudes that exist in our society when it comes to the treatment of women? What has been the problem? Is it the messaging or is it us? Men have to take a lot of the responsibility; there's no question about it. To a large degree, we have failed in our role as leaders as well.

The culture has to change, and it has to start with the men; there's no question. The boys of today have to think differently than the old boys of yesterday—I'm not suggesting everyone. Please, it's not universal; it's not everyone. But for anyone who does think that way, it's got to change, and the only way we can rid our society of those kinds of wrongs is to start with our kids.

I'm so fortunate. My wife and I talk about how fortunate we are that our two daughters are married to wonderful men who treat them with such utmost respect. We're so impressed every time we see them with how their husbands treat them. Actually, it makes me look bad sometimes, to be honest with you—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Because we also hear from them about friends of theirs who are in relationships that are not so good, where the female partner of that relationship has on more than one occasion considered leaving the relationship because they do feel they are being abused within that relationship—and in some they have.

There's so much that we have accomplished but so much more to do. But this committee and this bill—and I thank the government for bringing it forward. This bill will help. Every little bit will help to change that attitude that is so damaging to our society and so damaging to even future generations if we don't change that attitude.

I want to thank my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for the tremendous focus that she's had on the human trafficking issue. I have to be honest with you, Speaker: When she first started to talk to me about human trafficking, I certainly did not understand how pervasive and local it really was. I really had the picture, like probably a lot of people out there, that this was something where people from foreign lands were brought in and treated as sex slaves here in Canada or somewhere else in the western world. Then you start to delve into it and, through the work that Ms. Scott has done, you find out that—is it 90%?

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**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Over 90%.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** —over 90% of these young girls—and in most cases it's young girls. I cede to the minister who has also pointed out that young boys can be victims of trafficking—absolutely, no question about it. It is wrong no matter who it is and it needs to be stopped. But for the most part, it is young girls.

To have been able to be educated myself, and through my colleague, about how local and how pervasive this is, is actually helpful. Then you know that we really need to take a look inside. We had a short time during the debate when my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton talked about the people who run these hotels and how they should be ashamed and they should be watching. He's right, that if somebody is a frequent flyer, as they say, if it's an adult, then we know they're up to something wrong; and if it is a child, then we know that if they're a frequent visitor to that hotel, they're being abused. We know that, and that should send up any kind of a signal for those people to stop that behaviour.

But even more important, anybody—anybody—out there who believes that sexual activity with a child is right is wrong. That is something that has to be pointed out, too. It is not just the pimps of these poor victims, but it is anybody who would actually take advantage of them, and that has to be stopped. That has to be stopped.

I brought out a private member's bill that dealt with a different part of this equation. That is about when people are released from prison and how we might protect their victims so they wouldn't be re-victimized in acts of serious violence. This was brought on, of course, by the murders of three women in my county on September 22 of last year. Electronic monitoring, we believe, would have—could have—prevented those deaths. As I say, and I don't want to monopolize the clock—have I got a little more time?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I can't say absolutely, but those crimes may have been prevented if that person, when he was released from prison, had an electronic monitoring system, so the police could have known if he was moving in the direction where he was prohibited from being, where those women lived. If they could have got the jump on him, maybe, just maybe—I'm not a fortune teller; I'm not a soothsayer—those crimes could have been prevented. I do know one thing: It would afford better protection than we have today.

That's what we always have to look for: Is there something here that we can be doing better on? I believe there's a lot of things we can be doing better on. This bill is a significant step forward. There are so many more things we can improve on and, hopefully, in my lifetime we will reach a time when there is no such thing as the abuse of a woman because of her sex, there is no abuse for a spouse, there is no abuse of a child, and we live in a world where everybody—everybody—is treated with the respect they absolutely deserve. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Lanark-Frontenac—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry? I thought that he—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** There's a change-up.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Okay. There's a change-up.

The member for Dufferin-Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your indulgence. And thank you to my colleague from Lanark, Frontenac and Addington for giving me a few minutes.

I participated in the clause-by-clause and some of the public hearings on Bill 132 and, Speaker, I have to say that I was very disappointed that what we were hearing in clause-by-clause has not been translated into what I think could have been some very positive amendments with Bill 132.

So I'll focus on that because, quite frankly, it touched on many of the amendments that both the NDP critic and, of course, Laurie Scott from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes tried to bring forward through amendments and were shut down very consistently. And that was the need to ensure that not only the students were part of the discussion, but that we had to bring in the experts who were already working in the field and in the community. It really spoke to me that every time we tried to say, "Absolutely, make sure that the students are engaged and part of the process, but also tap into those experts in the field," we were shut down.

Finally—I guess probably out of frustration—I read into the record, and I want to do it here today as well, all of the individual presentations that suggested that we needed to make sure that consultation was wide and inclusive. The stakeholders that were calling for campus community inclusion included, and I will repeat for the record:

- Advocates for a Student Culture of Consent;
- Canadian Federation of Students;
- Colleges Ontario;
- Council of Ontario Universities;
- Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children;
- Lakehead University;
- METRAC;
- members of the Carleton community;
- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Sexual Assault Network;



—Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres;  
 —Society of Graduate Students at Western University;  
 —Trent Central Student Association and Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario;  
 —Trent University;  
 —University of Guelph;  
 —University Students' Council, Western University;  
 —Western University;  
 —WomenatthecentrE;  
 —Wilfrid Laurier University; and  
 —York University.

Speaker, I've been at Queen's Park long enough to understand that there are many debates that we hive off and they become very political, but when there are 19 groups that are suggesting that we need to ensure that there is wider consultation and participation and, quite frankly, to tap into their expertise, I find it quite disappointing that when the Liberal members of the committee had that opportunity through Bill 132 amendments—because, let's face it, that is actually what the public consultation and the clause-by-clause is all about, right? You go out and you hear from the experts. You hear from people impacted by the proposed legislation. Then you react and respond. I always thought the idea was, in clause-by-clause, we were listening to those deputations and then translating them into rational and reasonable amendments to the legislation.

I will suggest to you that the fact that the NDP member of the committee as well as the PC members were bringing forward the same type of amendment suggests to me that we actually got it and we were listening to the deputations and we saw an opportunity to improve the legislation. But by the end of clause-by-clause for Bill 132, I will admit I was getting a little frustrated. Perhaps I was getting a little frustrated to the point that I took an opportunity, and I suggested that the title of the legislation should be changed because what in fact this legislation was doing was, it was improving some things, but it was improving it to the detriment of other individuals.

I actually suggested that the title of the bill be amended slightly and, instead of saying "sexual violence and harassment action plan" it should be "for students," because if you are a visitor to a college or university campus, if you are a non-paid staff, if you are a staff person, there are no changes in Bill 132 that are going to protect you. I will say it again—I said it in committee—that I think that that is such a missed opportunity. We could have done better. I suggested in committee that in fact I believe and my prediction is that you will see a human rights case come forward because we have done one very narrowcast, focused thing with Bill 132. We could have widened it. We could have made it better. The government committee members chose not to go that route.

I don't like making predictions, but my prediction is that you are going to see a human rights case come forward because we didn't expand the breadth of this piece of legislation. I wanted to focus on that and I really

wanted to bring that up in the broader discussion that we're having here today because both the NDP and the PC critic—we listened. We heard that in deputation, and we heard it, as I said—I'll repeat again: 19 different, separate individuals came forward, representing organizations, saying, "Good bill, good start. Don't forget us." We didn't do that, and I think it's a terrible shame.

1420

With that, I'll thank my colleague and PC critic the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and hope that down the road, we can see a little more give on the government side, to ensure that everyone is protected, not just a narrow cast of students.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It has been a pleasure listening to my colleagues from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Dufferin–Caledon.

I had the opportunity to be on this select committee, on behalf of my party. It was a very difficult committee to be on, hearing those personal stories of tragedy and fear, and the failings that so many of these women experienced. It was hard to understand what they actually did experience, even though they gave compelling testimony.

My colleague from Dufferin–Caledon said that we can do better on this bill. I'm going to say to you and everyone that we must do better than what is in this bill at the present time.

As the representative for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, my job is to represent my constituents. One of the most effective ways that I've learned how to represent my constituents is to share my stories.

Domestic violence is often one of those things that we believe only happens to someone else. It happens to everyone. It has happened to me and my family. Last October, I missed a week of being in this House. Myself, my grandchildren, my daughter, my wife—we all were in hiding.

The night of October 4, we experienced a very violent home invasion. The partner of my daughter had assaulted her a few days previously, and came to our house and attempted to burn our house down, and came armed. It was a violent episode.

Thankfully, my daughter had a place to come back to—the family home—after she experienced the assault on her and her children. I provided safety as best I could.

There were restraining orders in place. Her partner had been charged and had conditions placed, but conditions are only a piece of paper, Speaker. They are not very effective.

As a result of that night, he was eventually apprehended and faced 16 charges. Four of them were for a maximum of life in prison—plus various other charges. He was convicted on December 19 just past. He was sentenced to a year for those 16 charges by way of a joint submission by both the crown and the defence.

Tomorrow, he has his parole hearing. We've met with all the agencies, all the police enforcement and the crown, to find ways to help my family—my daughter, my grandchildren, my wife—not to live in fear. But if he's not out tomorrow, he'll be out not long from now.

There are many failings in our system—many, many failings—and this bill does little to address those failings. I've had significant discussions with the crown, with the OPP, with victim services and with the judges in my area. I want to share with the House some of my experiences and what I see that could be done and must be done in order to help families who are living in fear and, hopefully, to prevent victims in the first place, but certainly, to prevent reoffending from occurring, or to limit it as much as possible.

It was interesting, Speaker: This person who was convicted—by way of a joint submission, they agreed that his term would be best served in a treatment facility for addictions and mental health. So they took that into consideration for his year term. However, when he was convicted and sentenced, there was no room at the treatment facilities. So instead, he was just sent to another facility. But the point here is that the crown expected him to go to a treatment facility and had no way of knowing whether there was room at the treatment facility or not.

There is no feedback mechanism from our corrections services to the crown or the courts. There has to be a feedback mechanism so that the crown is not sentencing people to things that we don't have. That's number one. It needs to be done. It's just absolutely—what's the right word? To be sentencing somebody with an expectation, but the expectation cannot be fulfilled, and there is no mechanism to know if it could be fulfilled—but it goes on.

One of the real oddities of my experience was that the court gave very specific direction and orders but also very broad latitude to probation and parole that they could compel this individual on probation to any sort of treatment or program. Talking with probation afterwards, they told me very specifically that, unless it is detailed in the court order, they will not do anything else—things such as random drug testing. Although this person has a three-year ban on alcohol and drug use, the probation will not do any drug testing unless it's explicitly detailed in the court order. This broad latitude is not sufficient for probation. Speaking with the crown last Friday, she informed probation that, if they don't do it, she'll go back to court and get a court order for drug testing.

The expectation of the crown and our courts and the realization in probation and corrections are miles apart. They don't know what each is doing. There is, again, no mechanism for the courts or the crown to understand what's happening in probation unless there is a significant breach of probation. One is doing it completely differently than what the other is expecting.

During that meeting last week, the crown asked for the court documents from probation—we were in the same meeting together—and probation refused to give the court documents to the crown attorney, even though it's a

public document. She said, "I don't have the authority to give you that." Anyway, the crown immediately got a copy and read it out loud to everyone. They have the authority to do that, but probation will not do it.

1430

As for the case of electronic monitoring, that's just a total myth. We have no live electronic monitoring program available in this province. It doesn't exist. The best we have is a passive electronic monitoring where we know when the person comes home and when he leaves. That's it. What sort of monitoring is that? It's easily removed. Nobody is talking about this. This bill doesn't address this. We actually don't have a program for monitoring. This is absolute craziness, in my view. Again, the courts are expecting one thing; probation or corrections are doing something entirely different.

We need to start having people in the administration of our justice actually communicating with one another. I know we can't legislate that—well, I guess we could. We could. I don't think it requires legislation, but it does take the ministers to get together and to find out what the failings are and then deal with them. It's not just money. What I'm talking about is not money. This is talking about effective management, effective administration of our justice system.

Another thing: I became quite surprised when I gave my statement and when my family gave their statements to the crown and to the police. Not once were we ever called back and asked for clarification or asked for details. I'm assuming that those statements were read and understood, but I have no way of knowing. There was never any interchange; there was never any discussion. I think I'm a pretty good writer, but I don't think I'm perfect. I know I'm not perfect. When I described the events of that night, I was shocked that nobody called me up and asked for further explanation or clarification. It wasn't just myself; it was also my wife and my daughter.

We need to do better. We need to do much better. That became very clear to me during the Jian Ghomeshi trial, where we saw that the crown did not seek clarification from the statements. We don't know what will happen in that case, but it was clear it was not a one-off. It wasn't just me that they didn't ask for clarification from; they just don't.

Also, the police are completely excluded from having any influence in the plea negotiations; they are not sought out for advice on what is the danger that this individual poses to society. Unless the judge orders and has cause to order a pre-sentence report, the police are excluded from any involvement in our judiciary, any involvement in the negotiations or the sentencing or the conditions afterwards.

Those are just a few of my experiences.

This bill, although we all appreciate the government taking this issue seriously and bringing it to the Legislature, has to do better. It has to do much, much better. I'm glad and proud that I'm in a caucus that understands how serious this is. We have colleagues spending significant efforts advancing laudable goals to end violence against women, to end families living in fear.



Member from Kawartha, this is amplified in rural Ontario. Our geography makes it so, right? That night, I don't know how long it took the OPP to get to my place. It felt like eternity as I fought off an armed individual who was pouring diesel into my house, and smashing doors and windows. However, I know geography played a role in that length of time.

We have to look at how we can help all families, all women, but it can't be a blanket approach. We need to understand that rural perspective as well. I'm looking forward for this bill to come to committee. I am looking forward and I'm going to expect that we make it better—much better.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to start off by thanking the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for his courage in sharing that personal experience and the insights that that provides into the debate that we're having here today.

I'm very pleased to rise as the NDP critic for women's issues to participate in this third reading debate on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. As we've heard from those who have spoken on the bill, this is legislation that we all support. It is welcomed by many stakeholder organizations across the province, many individuals who have experienced sexual violence, workers who have been subject to sexual harassment in the workplace and the agencies who support those individuals. The bill received strong support when it was first announced by the government last November, and virtually everyone who appeared before the Standing Committee on Social Policy during the hearings on the bill in January or who wrote to the committee spoke in favour of the bill.

On behalf of my caucus, I want to say that absolutely we support Bill 132. We supported it at second reading and we continue to support it today. That does not mean, however, that we view the bill before us today as perfect. During the hearings of the social policy committee, we heard from stakeholders about the many opportunities that were available to improve and strengthen the bill. I'm going to focus on some of those suggestions that were made, that were reflected in the amendments that I brought forward, but in particular I'm going to be talking about schedules 3 and 4, as those are the schedules related to post-secondary campuses and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Speaker, we were very disappointed that not a single amendment that was proposed by the NDP caucus to those two schedules—or to any of the other schedules, in fact—was supported by the government. I brought forward 34 amendments, amendments that were developed in direct response to the feedback that was provided to the committee, and not a single one was approved by the government members. I do want to recognize and thank the PC members who sat on the committee with me, who recognized the merit of many of the amendments that I

proposed because they spoke to the issues that we heard about at the committee. Certainly, they understood the need to honour the time that people took to prepare presentations to the committee and the expertise that they brought to the deliberations.

Bill 132 implements most of the legislative commitments that were outlined in the government's It's Never Okay action plan, which was announced almost exactly one year ago, to address sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, on post-secondary campuses, in rental housing and in civil court proceedings.

1440

As I said, the bill has six schedules, although I will be focusing mostly on schedules 3 and 4, which were also the schedules that the majority of the deputants who appeared before the social committee talked about.

I do want to briefly touch on schedules 1 and 2, however. Those schedules of the bill deal with the civil claims process. Schedule 1 removes the two-year limitation period from the Limitations Act to allow survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board at any time.

Schedule 2 allows survivors of sexual assault to pursue civil proceedings at any time. Certainly, Speaker, there was no controversy about these schedules. In fact, they allow Ontario to catch up with several other provinces that have already acted to put these changes in place. BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have all already removed limitation periods for sexual assault. The two-year limitation has unquestionably been a legal barrier that has prevented sexual abuse survivors from going through the court process to seek compensation and acknowledgment of the harm that was perpetrated against them.

One of the issues that I raised when I spoke to this bill at second reading is that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board compensation awards and any monetary damages awarded by the courts can be factored into the calculation of assets for Ontario Works, ODSP and rent-geared-to-income housing. Abuse victims who are in receipt of ODSP or Ontario Works and receive civil damages are actually required to reimburse the government for the amounts they receive if they want to remain eligible for assistance.

I want to read a letter from a lawyer whose client is in exactly this situation.

"My client is a poor and disabled Ontario woman in her fifties who, while in the care of a children's aid society, was sexually assaulted and impregnated by her foster father. In 1979, my client gave birth to the child resulting from her foster father's sexual abuse. My client was only 15 years old at the time. She decided to keep and raise the child on her own and without support.

"In 2010, my client reported her former foster father's sexual abuse to the police. DNA evidence proved he was her child's biological father. Thereafter, the former foster father was convicted and sentenced.

"I subsequently assisted my client to file a criminal injuries compensation application. I also commenced a

civil lawsuit on her behalf against the involved children's aid society and the former foster father.

"Recently, I received a letter on Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Children and Youth Services letterhead from the legal services branch, advising me that my client is subject to a claim for reimbursement of over \$125,000, this being what she has received as ODSP income support payments since the early 2000s, and that because she continues to receive income support payments, I can expect the ministries' claim to increase."

Speaker, what this means is that survivors of sexual abuse who pursue civil claims and are on ODSP or Ontario Works face having their benefits either reduced or possibly being disqualified from continuing to receive benefits in the future. What we're doing is forcing low-income survivors of sexual violence, and also survivors living with disabilities, to choose between pursuing their perpetrator through the civil courts or jeopardizing their access to benefits. This is an issue that the select committee heard about, and we heard it again during public input on Bill 132.

We know the statistics about the increased risk of sexual violence for marginalized groups, for racialized women, for indigenous women, for sexual minority women, for women living in poverty. We know that four out of five women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted at some point during their lifetime.

This is an issue that the government can address immediately through regulatory changes to the ODSP and Ontario Works acts. I would encourage the minister to look at this and move this through quickly.

I mentioned the 34 amendments that I proposed that were not supported by the government. One of them was an amendment that was suggested by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, OCASI, who pointed out that many immigrants and newcomers are not aware of their legal rights. So clarifying that Bill 132 applies regardless of immigration status would certainly be helpful, in their view, and, in my view, it would be helpful to encourage immigrant and newcomer women to come forward.

Representatives of victim services organizations who spoke to the committee—specifically with relation to schedules 1 and 2, because they will cause more cases of historic abuse to come forward—raised concerns about ongoing funding for victim services organizations. The survivors of historic abuse require much more intensive counselling and more comprehensive kinds of supports. So there will be a need for the government to ensure that the funding is there, to enable those services to provide the supports that survivors need.

I want to just remind members that schedules 1 and 2, certainly, are important in creating a more responsive justice system. I mentioned the lawyer who had written that letter to us. However, it's important to always keep in mind that very, very few survivors ever report to anyone what happened to them, much less to the police or the courts. It is unlikely that women will be lining up

any time soon to file civil suits as a result of these changes.

There are many other changes that will be necessary to ensure access to justice for survivors of sexual assault, and I want draw the government's attention to recommendations 10 through 15 of the final report of the select committee, which set out some important additional changes that could be and should be implemented to improve the responsiveness of the court process.

Now, schedules 3 and 5 of Bill 132 require that all post-secondary institutions have stand-alone sexual violence policies to protect students from sexual violence on campus. Schedule 3 deals with Ontario colleges and universities, and schedule 5 deals with private career colleges. These schedules offer a definition of "sexual violence" as "any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality ... whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation."

One of the government members did mention that that definition was amended to reflect the input that we heard from Egale to acknowledge that individuals can be targeted for sexual violence because of their gender identity or gender expression. I certainly am very pleased to see that amendment reflected in the bill before us today.

However, there were many other suggestions for changes and improvements to the definition of "sexual violence," in particular some kind of explicit statement that sexual violence can occur online, through social media—it can take cyber forms—and also to recognize the intersection between sexual violence and domestic violence, the reality that sexual violence often occurs within the context of a domestic or intimate partner relationship.

Certainly we know that in the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, that recommendation was made as long ago as 2010, that there be public education campaigns on post-secondary campuses to educate students about dealing with intimate and dating violence. This would have been a great opportunity to include that in the sexual violence policies that campuses have to have, but the government has chosen not to do that.

The other major amendments that I proposed that were not supported are around the application of the sexual violence policy. Seventeen organizations, by my count, came to the committee and emphasized the importance of having a policy that was broader than just the students who were enrolled at a particular institution. They talked about applying the policy to faculty and staff, students who might be visiting from other institutions, visitors to the campus and volunteers on the campus.

1450

Of course, I had proposed an amendment, as did the PCs, to expand the policy to all members of the campus community. The government continued to insist that the policy should focus only on students. Meanwhile, we



were hearing from students at the committee that the policy would make them vulnerable if it did not have broader application. We heard, for example, that students who are elected to student government are not technically students enrolled at the institution; they are, in fact, employees of the institution. So the sexual violence policy would not apply to them.

Another concern that was raised repeatedly was the need to clearly distinguish between formal reports to an institution and confidential disclosures of an experience of sexual violence. With formal reports, there is an expectation that action will be taken. With confidential disclosures, the survivor's only purpose in disclosing may be simply to share that this happened to them. They may not expect any kind of official follow-up or documentation of the disclosure. We heard, over and over again, that the legislation, as currently written, does not provide room for these kinds of confidential, undocumented disclosures. It assumes that all incidents and complaints of sexual violence are going to be tracked and recorded by the institution, regardless of the wishes of those who had the experience of sexual violence on campus when they disclose. We have to respect the rights of survivors to determine how they want their experience to be addressed by the institution.

Another amendment: The institutions, currently, are expected to consider student input in the development of their policies and to review their policy at least once every three years. In response to input that we received at the committee, I proposed amendments to ensure that input was not only considered but incorporated in the development of the policy, that it be solicited broadly from students, survivors—from a diversity of student voices across the campus community—and that community organizations, like sexual assault centres, rape crisis centres and domestic violence/sexual assault treatment centres, should also be consulted in the development of the policy, because there is a good likelihood that students who experience an incident of sexual violence on campus may not access any campus resources at all; they may go directly to the community. So there is knowledge that exists within the community and there is expertise in the community that should be tapped into in the development of these stand-alone post-secondary campus policies.

I also proposed a two-year review cycle rather than a three-year cycle in direct response to the input from student organizations, another amendment that failed.

The other big piece of the input we received on Bill 132, on schedule 3 and, to a lesser extent, schedule 5, was about the collecting of data by means of an anonymous climate survey rather than as counts across many different campus departments and divisions about who accessed what. We heard from the institutions that there may be logistical barriers to collecting this data, because students could potentially go to any number of people or units on campus to disclose experiences of sexual violence: They could go to a residence don; they could go to campus security; they could go to student

services. So consolidating all of this information from so many different sources is going to be challenging and onerous for institutions.

But again, as I mentioned earlier, the real issue is the power that this takes away from survivors, who lose the right to determine what is done with their experience. As I mentioned, they may only wish to disclose confidentially. They may not want the details of their experience recorded for statistical purposes.

My amendment required the minister to administer an anonymous survey every two years to collect data on perceptions of safety on campus, experiences with sexual violence that perhaps a student never disclosed to anyone, experiences accessing sexual violence services that are available on campus or exist in the community and then, of course, experiences reporting incidents and complaints. My amendment also clarified that the only data that will be required from institutions is with regard to formal reports to the institution. So, taken together, these amendments, the client survey plus only requiring data on formal reports, would provide a much richer, much fuller picture about what is happening on post-secondary campuses.

Instead of approving my motion, the government passed its own motion, stating that the minister may conduct a survey relating to the effectiveness of the college or university sexual violence policy. At committee, I expressed serious concerns about the wording of the government's motion, its use of the noncommittal "may," its lack of time frame for the implementation of the survey and its silence on whether the survey is to be a single snapshot in time or conducted on a regular basis, because the whole point of doing a survey is to create a baseline so that the institution can measure itself against the baseline and understand how it's doing with its sexual violence policy and whether students actually feel safer on campus and feel supported by their institutions.

I am disappointed with the wording in the current bill, but I will be monitoring closely to ensure that the government follows up on the implementation of a climate survey—not just once but on an ongoing basis.

I now want to turn to schedule 4 of the bill, which amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to specify that workplace harassment includes workplace sexual harassment and also adds a new definition of "workplace sexual harassment" to the act. These amendments address some of the flaws in Bill 168, which amended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to add explicit reference to workplace violence following the murders of Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont.

Bill 168 clarified that workplace harassment is a hazard covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it did not explicitly require employers to take reasonable precautions to prevent harassment and investigate complaints. Basically, all it said is that employers had to have a policy and a program in place. There were no legislative provisions to monitor the quality of the policy and no authority to order employers to investigate complaints and carry through on the results of the investigation.

Bill 132 addresses this very real gap and does require employers to investigate and address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. It also sets out a process that employers are supposed to use to deal with incidents or complaints of workplace harassment, including—and I appreciate that this was written into the bill—when the employer or the supervisor is the harasser.

Employers are required to investigate and address incidents and complaints of sexual harassment. They are required to inform the parties in writing of the results of their investigation and the actions they took subsequently. They are also required to review their workplace harassment program at least once a year to ensure that it adequately implements the policy that is in place. There are also some confidentiality provisions to ensure the protection of personally identifying information and requirements as to how the worker and the alleged harasser are informed of the results of the investigation and corrective actions that may have been taken.

One of the most welcome and important provisions of schedule 4 is that it includes the authority for occupational health and safety inspectors to order employers to conduct investigations and retain an impartial third party at their own expense. This addresses that flaw that was present in Bill 168 that did not have that power to order an investigation.

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I want to address some of the missed opportunities that we identified in schedule 4, but I want to begin by highlighting the lack of consistency across definitions of “sexual harassment” and “sexual violence.” This is problematic across all the statutes that are in place in the province, if we are to be able to effectively address sexual violence and harassment.

So there are six schedules included in the bill that we have before us today, and all of them define “sexual violence” somewhat differently: Schedules 3 and 5 define “sexual violence” as including sexual harassment but excluding intimate partner violence or domestic violence; schedule 4 makes a complete separation of sexual violence from sexual harassment; schedules 1, 2 and 6 reference both sexual violence and domestic violence, acknowledging the reality that these forms of violence frequently co-occur.

As a result, even within this single bill, Bill 132, what we have is almost a two-tiered system of legal rights, depending on which statute applies to the sexual violence that was committed.

One of the amendments that I brought forward in response to the input that was provided at committee was to try to introduce a little bit more consistency into these definitions and to acknowledge that harassment can be physical or psychological in nature. Curiously, although schedules 3 and 5 of the bill acknowledge that sexual violence can be physical or psychological in nature, this proposed change to the definition of “sexual violence” in schedule 5 was rejected by the government members.

I also proposed an amendment to recognize reprisal or threat of reprisal for refusing a sexual solicitation or

advance as sexual harassment. Of course, this is an important nuance that was brought to the committee during public input, but it too was voted down.

Other amendments that I proposed were, again, reflective of the input that was received and also consistent with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment’s final report. I brought an amendment to the committee to require mandatory training for all managers, supervisors and workers on the impact of sexual violence and domestic violence in the workplace and how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence and domestic violence.

There has been, throughout all of the consultation processes that the government is currently engaged in—the Changing Workplace Review; closing the gender wage gap; the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which has wrapped up its work; the public input in Bill 132—in each of those consultation processes, we’ve had input reinforcing and emphasizing the importance of requiring mandatory training in particular on domestic violence in the workplace. I do want to call the government’s attention to the fact that its own 2011 Sexual Violence Action Plan includes a recommendation that there be mandatory training on responding to sexual violence.

So my amendment to bring this mandatory training to all workplaces in the province is very consistent with our final report and with other government plans, but again, it was not supported by the government members.

What we heard in defence of the government’s position during the social policy committee was that Bill 168 already requires employers to make information available about workplace violence. However, during the hearings of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we heard that there is, in fact, a very clear and compelling need to make this training and education mandatory in the workplace.

We had a presentation from Barb MacQuarrie, who is a researcher from the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. She is working with the Canadian Labour Congress on a national survey of all workplaces across the country. The survey was conducted online. They had a really significant response. That survey showed that 43% of workers who were experiencing domestic violence at home disclosed the violence to a co-worker.

When we think back to Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont—the murders that led to the implementation of Bill 168—in those cases the violence that those women were experiencing at home followed them right into the workplace. If there had been education and training for their co-workers on how to recognize the signs of domestic violence, how to respond to disclosures of domestic violence, we might have saved those women’s lives. There is an urgency to ensuring that this training and education gets into Ontario workplaces.

When Barb MacQuarrie came to the select committee and talked about her research, she told us about this great program that the government has funded called Make It



Our Business. It is an evidence-based training program that is supported by robust materials and available to all workplaces in the province. When I asked her how many workplaces are taking up those materials and distributing them to the employees who work there, she said about 1%. That means that about 1% of all Ontario employers are accessing the training that has been funded by the government that is available to educate workers about domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace. That is unacceptable. It is too low. We need to do better to ensure that all workplaces in the province understand the implications of domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace.

I just want to take a moment in case any of the government members regret having voted against that amendment. They will have an opportunity to support my private member's bill that I will be introducing tomorrow. It will be debated on Thursday and it does exactly what these amendments tried to do; that is, to require mandatory workplace training on domestic violence and sexual violence. So it's not too late.

Speaker, it is estimated that Canadian employers lose \$78 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence, and about \$18 million a year because of sexual violence. There are huge costs in terms of lost productivity, absenteeism and distractedness. Women who experience domestic violence often report disrupted work histories. They change jobs more frequently. They are more likely to be poor, more likely to be working in precarious jobs or contemporary mobile employment. Perpetrators of domestic violence also report that their job performance is affected. They have difficulty concentrating, which leads to increased risk of workplace accidents. So domestic violence and sexual violence have a direct impact on the workplace, and Bill 132 would have been an opportunity to mitigate those impacts by introducing the mandatory training.

One of the concerns that I raised about schedule 4 of the bill, the Occupational Health and Safety Act amendments, was around the lack of the acknowledgment of the role of the joint health and safety committee or the health and safety representative, and the knowledge that the people who participate on those committees bring to the process of developing, implementing and reviewing policies. I had recommended that employers should be obligated to consult with joint health and safety committees when they are developing their policies, and they should be required to notify the committees of any incidents or complaints of workplace harassment that they investigate. This was echoed in the input that came to the committee and, as a result, I proposed specific amendments to create a much more proactive role for the joint health and safety committee. Unfortunately, again my amendments were voted down.

1510

I also proposed that the person who's conducting the investigation should be impartial and selected from a list of designated impartial persons, because we know that the effectiveness of this schedule, the effectiveness of

Bill 132 is going to rely in large part on the quality of the investigations and ensuring that the investigations are conducted appropriately and with concern for impartiality on both sides.

Another important amendment that I suggested was to require employers to take reasonable measures to actually prevent workplace harassment. The language of the bill is interesting. It says that employers are obligated to protect workers by investigating complaints. This is not protection as we would normally think of it, in taking preventive measures; this is after the fact. The legislation sets out the process that is to kick in once there has been an allegation of harassment. My amendment called on employers to take "all reasonable measures to prevent workplace harassment and to promote respect and dignity in the workplace, recognizing that all workers have a right to work in an environment free of workplace harassment." This was reflected in the government's own It's Never Okay action plan, which does state that the government's legislation would include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from harassment.

In the last few minutes of my speech, I wanted to focus a little bit of time on the importance of economic security in enabling women to leave abusive and violent relationships. It is often the implications of what leaving means that prevent women from ending abusive relationships. They potentially lose their home, their belongings, their friends. They lose access to family health and dental benefits, which is a particular concern if they're not working. We know that women who leave abusive relationships are 20 times more likely to be reliant on food banks after they leave and nine times more likely to go on social assistance, so there are real economic implications to leaving an abusive relationship.

Providing women with opportunities to achieve economic stability and financial independence is a critical strategy to address sexual violence, as is recognizing the need of women who are employed to receive medical treatment for the injuries resulting from the violence, to access counselling, to consult with police or pursue legal action, and to relocate to a safer place. They need to have the assurance that they can access these kinds of services without potentially jeopardizing their employment, if we are to truly make a dent in addressing gender-based violence.

I'm happy to say that my private member's bill on Thursday will provide all members with an opportunity to recognize that women—or anybody who's experiencing domestic violence and sexual violence—need to have these protections in the workplace so that they don't jeopardize their employment if they have experienced violence.

At the same time, New Democrats are very concerned about the lack of a gender lens in the government's 2016 budget and the failure of the budget to improve women's financial security. We know that child care has been universally recognized as an essential strategy to enable women to participate in the labour market and achieve

some kind of financial independence. If the government had applied a gender lens when they were developing the budget, they would have recognized that ignoring child care; cutting public services that tend to be dominated by women workers; stretching the poverty reduction funds over six years instead of five; allowing people on social assistance, who are disproportionately women, to fall further behind each year; failing to ensure that health care funding keeps pace with inflation and population aging; reducing female-dominated services like educational assistants and health care providers; refusing to fund pay equity for broader public sector workers—all these things have a disproportionate impact on women and jeopardize their ability to gain financial independence.

I just wanted to close on one final issue, and that is the issue I raised this morning during question period. The Liberal government has introduced cuts to the Partner Assault Response Program. If we are serious about ending domestic violence, we need to look at other ways to hold perpetrators responsible and accountable for their violence other than just jailing them. The research shows that even if the partner who was abused leaves, the abuser will go on to abuse again. So we need to change those behaviours. The Partner Assault Response Program was the one—the only—government program that gave us any kind of ability to start making those changes, and it has been cut by the Liberal government.

Certainly we welcome the amendments, but we will continue to push for a much more coordinated and integrated response to violence against women.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

Ms. MacCharles has moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

I wish to inform the House that I have received from the chief government whip a deferral notice asking that the vote on third reading of Bill 132 be deferred until the time of deferred votes on March 8, 2016.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

# CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY ACT, 2016

## LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Today I will be sharing my time with the President of the Treasury Board, the Chair of Cabinet, and the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Ontario is moving into a topic—that being putting a price on carbon—where the rest of the world has finally come to recognize some things that Ontario has known all along. While people are going to be talking about the cap-and-trade bill from various viewpoints, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy I just want to start with one facet that deals with the way the province generates electricity.

In the last several years, one of the accomplishments that Ontario has been able to celebrate has been the gradual shut-off of our coal-fired generating stations, and two years ago the last coal-fired generating station in Ontario was turned off permanently. Indeed, just to nail the coffin shut, you can now no longer legally generate electricity in Ontario by burning coal. That's a good thing.

**1520**

Let's look at some of the situations faced by the jurisdictions around us. Ontario is bookended by Quebec and Manitoba, two jurisdictions that generate all of their electricity using surplus hydro power, of which they have abundant amounts. But in the Great Lakes basin that we share with such states as Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Minnesota—in that area—when we look at the way our surrounding jurisdictions generate electricity only one such jurisdiction doesn't generate more than half of its electricity by burning coal. That one US jurisdiction is New York—and not by much. For example, in the state of Indiana, nearly all of its electricity comes from burning coal. In West Virginia, nearly all of its electricity comes from burning coal. In most of the Ohio Valley, more than two thirds of the electricity comes from burning coal.

The United States is also one of the 195 countries, I believe, that are signatories to the Paris climate change accords. That commits every such nation, every jurisdiction, to taking its coal-fired generation and they've got to turn it off—all of it. So here's one of the advantages to Ontario for having been such a first mover in climate change: Ontario no longer generates any electricity by burning coal.

Let's look at it a different way. When it comes to making that transition away from coal-fired electricity, here in Ontario we bought tomorrow's electricity-generating and transmission infrastructure using yesterday's money, and financing it over its useful life at interest rates of nearly zero. If you're in the surrounding jurisdictions in the Great Lakes basin in the United States, and indeed throughout the United States, you're going to struggle and scramble to buy today's electricity generation and transmission assets with tomorrow's



money, and finance it at interest rates that have nowhere to go but up. In this respect, Speaker, Ontario did pretty well.

Over the weekend, as I was preparing some things in the riding, I found an index of electricity prices in some of the states around us. I thought, "What happens if I convert this to Canadian dollars?" I looked up: Just how much does it cost to generate a kilowatt hour of electricity? For example, in my home city of Mississauga, where we deal with Enersource, our winter off-peak—which means 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. and all day weekends and stat holidays—those rates are 8.3 cents per kilowatt hour; our mid-peak rates are 12.8 cents per kilowatt hour; and our on-peak rates are 17.5 cents per kilowatt hour. As it happened, I happened to get my electricity bill at around the same time. I looked at it and some two thirds of the power that we use at home—and I suspect that's similar to most of my neighbours; we'll consume something like 1,000 kilowatt hours during the course of a single billing period—are off-peak rates.

So in looking up through the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of December 2015, and assuming a 75-cent Canadian dollar, let's look at some of the prices today for electricity in the United States: Connecticut, 25.9 cents; Maine, 20.7 cents; Massachusetts, 26.1 cents; Vermont, 22.9 cents; New York, 23.4 cents; Pennsylvania—

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I believe the member is not speaking to the bill at hand. I refer him back to Bill 172, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Well, I think he is.

I return to the member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. This is actually all about climate change, and while Ontarians, having already paid the costs of making the move in our electricity generation to a carbon-free electricity-generating system—we have done that and still have power rates that are below those in the surrounding US states.

This is the same type of opportunity that faces so many different sectors. As we remember in our baby boomer generation, the dramatic changes with the onset of the information technology revolution—it changed the way we do a lot of things today. In that same manner, it's reasonable to assume that the move from a carbon-intensive economy to a carbon-neutral or a carbon-free economy by shifting the costs of moving to those who generate carbon emissions is going to give rise to the same type of innovation that drove the IT revolution. And Ontario, being the first mover, is likely to be one of the beneficiaries on a scale similar to that of the first movers in the IT sector 35 years ago.

There's a lot of reason for optimism if you're an Ontarian today. First of all, your air is cleaner—and I'm talking again about one of the first steps that all nations

will take to remove carbon from their economies, which is to clean up their air by stopping generating electricity by burning coal. We're already there.

Now, as we move into looking at the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, as we move into the residential sector and the transportation sector, then we have a blueprint and a template in which we can see how to take our carbon emissions out of those sectors.

I thank you very much for your time, Speaker. I know there are others who have some very interesting comments to add to this topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pleased to recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand to speak to this bill today. I really do think that this is absolutely the right thing to be doing, and I was delighted to hear that the Progressive Conservative Party actually has adopted putting a price on carbon as part of their platform. So I think we're all on the same page: that we do need to move forward and take the steps necessary to protect this planet as best we can.

There's been a lot of discussion about the proceeds of this bill—of the revenues, actually, of cap and trade—and there's been some, I think, lack of clarity from the opposition side on what actually the proceeds can be used for. I was delighted to see that this bill makes it very clear what the proceeds of cap-and-trade can be used for.

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in a couple of announcements last month about how we're going to use proceeds. It helps give people a sense of where this money will be used. One of those I'd like to particularly highlight today: We've allocated \$325 million as a bit of a kick-start of the proceeds of cap-and-trade—\$325 million that will be invested in projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And \$100 million of that \$329 million is going to help homeowners save money by cutting down on their energy costs—\$100 million that we are giving to homeowners across the province to conduct the energy audit, help fund the cost of retrofits and save energy costs.

This is great news for a number of reasons. Obviously, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions—that's the primary goal. But it does more than that: It saves people money. In fact, we anticipate that hundreds of dollars every year could be saved by making retrofits such as putting in insulation, installing high-efficiency heating systems, air sealing. We're thinking that a homeowner in Toronto whose home was built prior to 1990 could see annual bill savings, on an average, of about \$400 by taking those necessary steps.

**1530**

The other part of this I think very wise investment of \$100 million is that it creates jobs. In fact, when we made the announcement, we were joined by people who insulate pipes. They talked about how they're going to hire more people and train more people to install this insulation. They talked about how the insulation itself is actually made right here in Ontario. So this is money that will be reinvested back into the Ontario economy,

creating jobs, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and saving homeowners money. It actually is a win on all fronts.

As we do move forward with implementing cap-and-trade, there will be revenues—no question about it—but we're going to make sure that every penny of the revenues that come from cap-and-trade is used to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I think that's essential. The money will be recycled back into the economy. We'll be reducing GHG emissions by putting a price on carbon but also by investing in initiatives that do reduce our carbon footprint.

I think, like many people here, our kids are teaching us how important this issue is. I have three children. They are all very concerned about the environment. They are very active in environmental causes. My son, actually, has a business called Strategic Sustainable Investments. He helps people invest their money in green companies. He has been my tutor when it comes to understanding the environment, understanding how serious climate change is, and how we're already paying a very high price by letting climate change occur. We're paying it in our insurance—we're paying it in a number of ways. So we do have to take action now.

This action, I think, is strong action. It will benefit our environment. It will benefit the people who care about the environment.

I think the notion that the polluter should pay is a principle that is well established in Ontario. We have fees on several types of pollution, and we will be adding carbon as another form of pollution.

Speaker, I'm very optimistic about the future. I'm very optimistic that the PC Party has at least acknowledged that this is action we must take. We will have, I'm sure, lots of debate about what kind of action that is, but I think that we have landed it very well. We're partnering with Quebec. We're partnering with California. We're creating a very large market. I think that we'll look back a decade from now, and we will say that we did the right thing by bringing in this legislation and by bringing in cap-and-trade.

Now, Speaker, it's time for me to wrap up, and I will pass it on to one of my colleagues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's a privilege to follow the President of the Treasury Board in speaking about this really important and what I think is a landmark initiative and landmark legislation. It's going to make a difference, not only in the years to come but for generations to come.

Speaker, before I get into the bill itself, I just wanted to share with you a short story. Over the weekend, I was speaking with constituents. I was returning phone calls on Sunday to a number of folks who had contacted my office. I contacted one individual. She was a senior, and we spoke about a range of topics, mostly around the budget. One of the things that was interesting was—we had been on the phone for quite some time; I think it was probably close to 45 minutes. We finished talking about a

range of topics and I thought that was it, and she said, "No. There's one more topic I want to talk to you about. This is the most important." She says, "What are we doing to address climate change?" The way she put it was: How do we ensure that we hand over this planet in a condition that our children can use it, was something along the lines of what she said. I started to tell my constituent about this bill. I started to tell my constituent about the cap-and-trade program. When she heard about that, she said, "That's really great. That's fantastic."

The reason I tell you that story is because, very often, when we think about climate change, we think about the impacts decades down the line. We think about the next generation. I was speaking to a group of young Liberals in Guelph about a week ago or so. This was top of mind for them. It's top of mind for a lot of young people I taught when I was teaching at York University.

What's interesting is, as this issue has come to the forefront, particularly recently with the introduction of this bill, many seniors in my community have raised this issue as well. I think the point here is that this unifies people of all ages and backgrounds. We have one planet that we share and we need to do something to make sure that we protect it and hand it to the next generations in the same condition, if not a better condition, than the way we found it. To me, that's what this bill is about.

When I think about this bill, there are two main components, and I really appreciate these two components that the bill addresses. The first is making sure that we have emission reduction targets that are in place and that we have action plans attached. That's a critical first component and that instills not only goals that must be met but accountability to make sure that we meet those objectives and those outcomes—and, then, the cap-and-trade program and how those proceeds are going to be used.

I just want to speak briefly in the couple of minutes that I have remaining about each of those two components. In terms of the emission reduction targets and action plans, this would establish in law the government's existing emission reduction targets. For the sake of my constituents who are watching, that's 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, 37% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. These are meaningful, quantifiable, measurable targets that we are instituting in law.

The bill would establish a framework for reviewing and increasing targets as needed as well as the establishment of interim targets. As someone who has been in business, I know sometimes you set long-term targets and those are important, but of course setting some interim targets can help make sure that we're on track, and the bill accommodates that. It requires the government to prepare a climate change action plan to make sure that we're achieving those targets. It's not enough to set targets. We actually have to meet them, and the plan has to define how we're going to do that.

It actually prescribes the content to be included in the action plan. The words "action plan" are not being used



loosely. It's being defined very specifically in law to make sure we have a timetable for each piece of the implementation plan.

An estimate of emission targets resulting from each action is what in business we would call an implementation plan: a specific set of actions with outcomes attached that will get us to our long-term objective. It's instituting accountability appropriately to make sure we meet those reduction targets.

And then there's the second piece of the bill, as I outlined earlier, which is the cap-and-trade program and use of proceeds. There are a number of things in here that I'd love to highlight and I won't have enough time, but here are just a few quick highlights: First of all, this allows for agreements with other jurisdictions so that we don't have a patchwork system; we have a system that's working in alignment with other jurisdictions. The President of the Treasury Board spoke about collaborating with Quebec and California but one can imagine in the future there will be more jurisdictions. This allows for that.

It sets out the types of initiatives that can be funded through this. This is really important. The proceeds cannot be spent however the government of the day should like. They have to be spent on specific types of initiatives and they have to be likely to reduce or support the reduction of greenhouse gases to be eligible to be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account. I think that's a really important point.

I think this bill, Speaker, ensures transparency with respect to how the proceeds will be used from the cap-and-trade and it will require the publishing of a report that will be released publicly to show each year how the funds are flowing in and out of the fund. It's really important for transparency but it also ensures that we're actually delivering on what this bill is supposed to do, which is set those climate targets, meet those climate targets and give our planet to the next generation in as good or better state than we found it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm glad to give a two-minute question and comment on what I've just heard from the members opposite. My ears did perk up when the President of the Treasury Board spoke about her children. I have five grandchildren. The last one was just born last July. The oldest ones will teach me every once in a while to do some things green. I appreciate that. I have walked along in parks and have had a can in my hand—an empty pop can—and I'll go to throw it in this garbage container when there are two there. They will say, "No, Grandpa. Don't do that. It goes in this one." So they are aware that we need to protect our environment, and I appreciate that.

1540

What this government doesn't tell them is that as soon as my last grandson was born, he was \$23,000 in debt because of mismanagement by this government. Unfortunately, that is the legacy that we've seen over the years. This scheme—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** You've got to talk to the bill, Randy.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm talking to the bill—this scheme, Speaker, is nothing but a cash grab on the good folks in Ontario. It is going to be used to pay for some of the debts that they have accumulated over the years. We've seen what's happened with other things that they have been involved with. The health tax is a perfect example; that went into general revenues.

I do believe that the people of Ontario are not being told the whole story here, and they should be told the whole story before this legislation proceeds. I'm afraid, Speaker, that it's not going to be told, and we're going to be into another mess where the people of Ontario are being gouged billions of dollars over the next few years, if this bill passes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to address a couple of the comments made by some of the members.

The environment has always been a huge, debatable subject over the years. I can remember the days when I used to fight against industrial landfills, hazardous materials and the dumping of that throughout our province and all that. Where the problem lies with these types of bills is enforcement. The Ministry of the Environment has very few inspectors. They don't enforce things. I remember in the dispute on the Ontario landfill in Hamilton, we went from one inspector—he'd come in on a night shift and maybe once on a day shift, once a week. Mind you, they were bringing in about 100 trucks a day, maybe more; sometimes on a night shift—120 trucks dumping with no inspector.

Then they decided in the EA process that they are going to have a citizens' liaison committee created. Once again, the Ministry of the Environment didn't follow through. They put people who were either connected or knew the company on this environmental assessment tribunal they had created locally for the municipality, and they were always ruling in favour of the company. There was really no enforcement. All the citizen members slowly got moved out the door, and they basically created a company liaison committee. It's like the fox guarding the henhouse.

So the problem with all these great ideas about cap-and-trade and all that is that this province doesn't enforce their own laws environmentally. They haven't for years. They slap them on the hand and give them a \$10,000 fine, which is chump change to some of these companies, and they don't care. They just keep going about their business.

I'll be really watching to see how they're going to enforce this and police this. It will be very interesting.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm glad to add my voice to the conversation.

I want to start by addressing what the official opposition was saying. They were talking about schemes.

“Scheme” is a word that denotes something that is going to be hidden, a secret. There’s no secret here. If passed, the proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act would ensure transparency and accountability by committing to invest the proceeds into projects that go to reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

The mandatory climate change action plans would need to include details that are related to how the proceeds would be used, the estimated amount of funding for each action, a timetable for implementation, an estimate of the emission reductions and the cost per tonne of potential reduction.

Building on further accountability to the public, the act would require an annual report on funds flowing in and out of the GGRA and a description of initiatives that are funded, including their relationships to the climate change action plan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we speak about fighting climate change, about protecting the environment. What does that mean? I speak to many constituents myself. My area was hit hard in 2013, for example, by the flash flooding that hit Toronto—severe thunderstorms. People can relate to that.

We are committed to investing the proceeds from the cap-and-trade program into initiatives that will make greener, lower-carbon alternatives more affordable to households. That’s why we are investing specifically in programs that will help homeowners save money on their energy bills, but also help them retrofit their homes so that they won’t have as much damage in situations of that sort.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, I do, Speaker. I’m pleased to join this ongoing debate on climate change and Bill 172, the climate change act.

In many ways, it is an ongoing and somewhat never-ending debate. The reason I say that is, we’ve been debating this issue since 1953. I don’t know whether many in this House are aware of that. A friend of mine, Robert McKaskell, lives down in Windsor, and he sent me a book. It was a compilation of newspaper articles from back in 1953. On May 15, 1953, in the *Globe and Mail*, the headline of that year was “Carbon Dioxide in Air Making World Warmer.”

So this debate has been going on now for 63 years. For some people here, it’s perhaps a newly discovered issue. Maybe it’s not newly discovered if you had the opportunity to study environmental science in our high school system. I know I was hired in 1969 to teach that course, and part of the course—this was in the late 1960s and early 1970s—was the impact of carbon dioxide and methane on our environment. At that time it was referred to as the “greenhouse effect.”

So we continue on today as legislators. It’s been 63 years now. We have a model before us today. It is a tax grab: no talk of any oversight, no talk of returning any of that money to the good people in Ontario, who do expect something, certainly, after 63 years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I enjoyed the comments both of my own colleagues and those of my friends across the aisle.

Certainly, on behalf of the government, the member for London North Centre talked about some of the partnerships that Ontario has formed and some of the alliances within which we’re sharing our experiences and addressing some of the challenges.

The member for Etobicoke Centre correctly called it landmark legislation and showed very clearly that he was thinking it through in terms of the implementation details of the legislation.

I was a little confused by the remarks of my colleague from Perth–Wellington in speaking about a program that, by and large, his own party just embraced less than 72 hours ago. He seemed to imply that he wants the benefits of it but still thinks that somewhere or other there’s someone else who will pay for it.

My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek raised what I thought was a reasonable concern in terms of the enforcement of its provisions. There are certain market mechanisms that are spelled out in the legislation, as well as the stronger legal framework within which the cap-and-trade formula will be allowed to work.

The member for York South–Weston’s comments show that she too is thinking it through and looking at how to make this proposal work. It’s not as if there’s another world to go to if we lose this one. This is it. This is the only one we have.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, again, seems to be reluctantly accepting that we’ve got to do this.

I think one of the most interesting comments that was made came from committee last week or the week before, when there was a First Nations member speaking about their experience with ice roads. He said that 10 and 15 years ago we could depend on reliable ice roads to get to the north for about three months, and this winter we’ll be lucky to have ice roads that are usable for three or four weeks.

So, Speaker, it’s time to get on with it. Thank you.

1550

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** It’s a pleasure to stand in this House and speak on Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. This bill would amend the Environmental Protection Act by repealing the definition of a greenhouse gas, along with the amendments the Liberals passed in 2009 to set up an emissions trading scheme.

The Liberals have not presented Ontarians with a credible plan to tackle climate change. The Premier’s cap-and-trade scheme lacks accountability and creates a new slush fund that can be used to finance Liberal pet projects. While Ontarians are willing to do their part to reduce emissions, it’s wrong for this government to raise



money in the name of the environment and then use it to pay for years of Liberal scandal, waste and mismanagement. With billions of dollars of new revenue every year, we know that we cannot trust this government to prioritize the environment over their spending addiction.

Ontarians expect and deserve a government that will take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. Under a cap-and-trade scheme, the government sets gradually decreasing limits or caps on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions allowed from companies that meet a certain threshold. In Ontario, that threshold is 25,000 tonnes for major emitters. Companies that exceed those limits must purchase emission allowances from companies that come in under their cap. These purchases or trades put a market price on carbon. Companies can also exceed their caps by purchasing offset credits, which in Quebec include capturing methane from manure storage facilities and landfills.

Despite the concerns of industry, the Liberals rushed to table Bill 172 on February 24 and release the draft regulation on February 25 so they could pat themselves on the back for a photo op on March 3, when the Premier attended the first ministers' meeting in Vancouver. The focus of that meeting was on energy, the environment and carbon pricing. This bill was intended to be rammed through the Legislature to get their cap-and-trade scheme up and running and to generate new revenue by January 1, 2017. This scheme would be linked with those already operating in Quebec and California under the Western Climate Initiative.

The government intends to raise \$478 million from cap-and-trade in the 2016-17 year. By 2017-18, this government will increase cap-and-trade revenue to \$1.9 billion, up from the \$1.3 billion they projected in the fall economic statement. This revenue will cover the government's spending spree on the Green Investment Fund, as well as other major projects and programs that are supposed to be outlined in the government's upcoming climate action plan.

This proposed cap-and-trade scheme would cover roughly 150 large emitters and would operate within three-year compliance periods, the first being 2017 to 2020. Under this system, the government will set an overall limit on emissions and both sell and give free allowances to companies to emit up to that limit. Each allowance is equal to one tonne of greenhouse gas. According to the Liberals' budget, they will set the initial carbon price at \$18 a metric tonne.

During this compliance period, emitters would be required to meet caps that decline between 4% and 5% a year. If emitters cannot meet those caps, they must purchase allowances to ensure that they hold enough allowances to equal their permitted emissions during the compliance period. Ontario's trade-exposed industries like cement, steel and chemicals have received free emission allowances and therefore will not face higher costs to meet declining caps. However, Liberals are requiring the natural gas and petroleum industry to purchase all

their emission allowances during the first compliance period. That is why the cost of natural gas, gasoline, diesel and propane will go up. It is projected that the cost of gasoline will increase by four cents a litre, diesel by 4.7 cents and natural gas by \$60 a year. Private sector estimates show that the long-term cost to families will be much higher, increasing the cost of gasoline by \$400 a year and home heating by \$475 a year.

This government has long wanted to impose a cap-and-trade scheme in the province. They also signed on to the Western Climate Initiative in 2008 to link an eventual emissions trading program with initiative partners like California and Quebec. To follow through on their commitment, this government passed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act to set up a cap-and-trade scheme and establish the reporting regulations for GHG emissions in 2009. They are now seeking to repeal the 2009 amendments to the EPA with Bill 172, but they're keeping the 2009 regulation as part of the reporting requirement for major emitters under the new cap-and-trade scheme.

This cap-and-trade scheme is command-and-control economics under the guise of a market-driven solution. In short, the Liberals design the game, set the rules, select the players, appoint the officials and pick the winners and losers. Obviously, in our opinion, the game is rigged, and those who stand to benefit are this government and companies with consultants that have close ties with this government.

Speaker, virtually every aspect of this scheme's design is left to regulation. That means that at any time the government could change the structure of this scheme, the trading rules, the mandatory participants and/or the powers of the minister to intervene in the carbon market.

The reporting regulations are already in place, and they have released a draft cap-and-trade program regulation for comment that sets up the parameters—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order: the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Sorry to interrupt, Randy, but I do believe there isn't a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask the table staff to determine if a quorum is present.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We return to the member for Perth–Wellington.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker.

Bill 172 gives the government authority to appoint new directors in the bureaucracy to manage registration, reporting and verification requirements. According to the bureaucracy, the environment ministry would need nearly 40 staff members for these areas.

The government has included the government's emissions targets in the bill, but they are not legally enforceable. The targets are as follows: 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, 37% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels in 2050.

I want to talk about a bill that reached second reading. I believe it was back in—it was the MPP from Sarnia-Lambton. This addressed some of the issues involved in greenhouse gas emissions. It was actually quite a bill; it reached second reading. It was called the Natural Gas Superhighway Act of 2015.

What it said, essentially, was that natural gas is an affordable, safe fuel. New engine technology is allowing North America's cargo transportation sector—medium- and heavy-duty trucks, trains and ships—to use natural gas as a cheaper fuel. Lower transportation costs have the potential for Ontario's manufacturing sector to get their products to market at more competitive prices. It also said that estimates of the North American gas fields suggest accessible deposits of low-cost natural gas could meet North American demand for the next 100 years. This would ease reliance on foreign oil.

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As a transportation fuel, natural gas represents a cleaner alternative to traditional fuels, especially diesel, for medium and heavy trucks, trains and ships. It's approximately 20% to 30% cheaper and 20% to 30% cleaner, thus helping to eliminate greenhouse gases. British Columbia and Quebec have already adopted legislation to promote natural gas as a transportation fuel, as well as American jurisdictions such as New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Colorado, California, Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. The member from Sarnia-Lambton did a tremendous amount of work on this bill, and I must congratulate him for that.

According to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, the transportation sector in 2010 was responsible for the largest volume of greenhouse gas emissions province-wide. He also said that this sector has witnessed a significant increase in emissions since 1990, while some sectors, such as electricity and industry, have seen a decrease. Medium and heavy-duty vehicles make up 3% of the vehicles on the road today, but contribute 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions from on-road sources. It is estimated that heavy-duty trucks running on natural gas reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 20% to 25% compared to their diesel counterparts. While the initial costs to purchase natural gas vehicles can be higher for operators, the savings associated make conversion a very attractive option, with an expected fuel cost savings of 20% to 30%.

Major American trucking companies are already taking the important first steps to transition to natural gas as a fuel source. Moreover, private investment is building a network of dedicated fuelling stations across the US, linking important manufacturing regions and transportation corridors. If Ontario doesn't take steps soon to open its borders to the same type of investment, it risks being left behind, and our businesses will lose their ability to get their products to market at competitive prices.

I just wanted to bring this to the attention of this House, since this bill reached second reading a couple of years ago. Actually, it was ordered to the Standing Com-

mittee on the Legislative Assembly. This is innovation. These are things that would help us control our greenhouse gas emissions. This is something that the transportation industry is quite interested in. These are the types of innovative things that we believe can help reduce our carbon footprint and certainly get rid of greenhouse gas issues. There are things that I would like to see in this bill to help with innovation. Truly, there is nothing in there with quite the scope that this bill would have.

I also would like to point out some other things that we have found out about this bill. Addressing climate change requires a credible plan that will reduce greenhouse emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. Unfortunately, this bill has done the opposite. The government plans to impose a new tax on gasoline and home heating to bankroll this government's cap-and-trade slush fund, which is exactly what it is. With this government's track record of waste, mismanagement and scandal, we know that this government's cap-and-trade scheme is just about the money, not the environment. We cannot support this cash grab and will vote against this bill.

Addressing climate change requires a credible plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy, which this is not doing. To effectively reduce emissions, the Ontario PCs understand that we must advance innovation—just as what I've talked about with the trucking industry—and increase energy efficiency and improve energy conservation.

Regulation and product standards, like lead in gasoline, have been successfully employed to reduce emissions elsewhere. This means investing in transit, modernizing buildings and working with industry to improve the efficiency of production processes.

As we all know, the former PC government led the way in phasing out coal in Ontario.

These are all proven ways, Speaker, to substantially reduce emissions, unlike cap and trade. Ontarians know that this government's cap-and-trade scheme is just about the money, not the environment. This Premier has broken her promise to Ontarians not to raise gas taxes. The Liberals swore in 2014—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the government members to please come to order. The member of Perth-Wellington has the floor; I have to be able to hear him.

The member for Perth-Wellington.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker.

The Liberals swore in 2014 that they would not gouge taxpayers to feed the government's spending addiction. This Premier is attempting to impose a new tax on gasoline and heating to bankroll the Liberals' cap-and-trade slush fund. This government has betrayed the trust of Ontarians and failed to present a credible plan to address climate change. Ontarians expect and deserve a government that will take action to effectively reduce emissions in a way that protects taxpayers and our economy.



This government's cap-and-trade scheme puts a new tax on energy bills that will make life more unaffordable for Ontarians and increase the cost of doing business in our province. In fact, long-term estimates show that cap and trade will increase energy bills for families nearly \$900 each and every year.

In private sector analyses, analysts believe that small manufacturers will be hit with \$170,000 in new energy costs every year. This additional expense could mean the loss of three good jobs at each company. This cap-and-trade scheme will put jobs at risk, shut out investment in our province, and increase the cost of gas, groceries and home heating fuels. We need a government that will effectively reduce emissions in a way that protects taxpayers and keeps our industry competitive within the North American marketplace.

Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about agriculture. You will know that I come from a very heavily agricultural-based economy in Perth-Wellington. Farmers our way have adopted and embraced GPS technology. What that does is, if they're out spraying crops, the GPS takes them along and tracks it so that they don't overspray. They keep their chemical use down. When they are spreading animals' manure on lands, they use the same GPS technology to make sure that they don't over-apply manure and so they can know how many gallons or litres they're putting on an acre of land.

What it also does is it reduces their fuel consumption because they're not going over the same land all the time. My son is involved with that. He said that their costs to reduce putting too many chemicals on land and also with the spreading of manure and that type of thing—cutting hay and corn—more than pays for the GPS technology that they've had to put in their tractors, which is certainly expensive.

Farmers have embraced this, and that's something the government should do: Go out to the agriculture industries, go to factories and manufacturing industries, and get their ideas. Consult with them so that we don't end up with issues which are very suspect and we don't end up with things that, in our opinion, are just going to be an extra tax burden on the people of Ontario.

1610

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My understanding of cap and trade is that if I have a company that's polluting and I meet my emission threshold and I have extra credits, I can sell those credits to another company that's not meeting their threshold or need them to meet their threshold. I'm a little confused with this, because if I have a company that cannot install proper equipment, cannot afford to put in the stack emission controls that maybe some of the larger companies can to meet their threshold and I see that installing that equipment is going to be more expensive than what I have to pay for the credits in cap and trade, I might have a tendency to continue to pollute and buy the cap-and-trade credits so that I can meet the threshold doing that. So I'm really not quite sure how this is going

to work and I'm very concerned about how you're going to enforce it.

Once again, I've lived through many landfills and many things over the years. It starts off with good conditions where they are going to inspect and all that, and then a year later, all of a sudden you don't have enough inspectors, they don't go as much, they don't go around and there we have pollution. Then we have the underground springs being polluted. We have lakes, we have rivers being polluted, to the extent where we can't recover, in some cases; and if we do, it will take 100 years. They talk about liners in landfills that are going to last 300 years. Well, we proved that wrong: The one in Hamilton didn't last five years and it was supposed to last 300, the Taro landfill.

That's the kind of thing that goes on. This government does not go into enough depth and detail on how to figure out how you're going to enforce the cap and trade on companies that can't physically, or don't have the technology to, make the changes they require to meet their threshold. They'll just buy credits and keep pumping it out. It's pretty scary, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I appreciate the comments made on cap and trade. With your indulgence, Speaker, this whole issue of greenhouse gases, global warming and air quality—if you might allow me to speak with reference, first of all, as a physician, because I have to say that the extraordinary impact that we are seeing on human health is something that really needs to be addressed.

As an example, the government very recently undertook trade missions, and members of this caucus were in both Beijing, China, as well as Delhi, India. In those jurisdictions the air quality is not subjected to the same level of scrutiny, rigour and regulations as we are now imposing, whether it's the restriction of coal-fired generation or the further management of cap and trade, the further reduction of greenhouse gases.

This is kind of an atmospheric or a breathing version of Flint, Michigan. This is a slow and steady poisoning of those particular populations with particulate matter which is, by the way, cancer-causing—or carcinogenic—with just the fumes, for example, inducing asthma attacks or attacks of COPD, emphysema and chronic obstructive lung disease.

As an example, we in these types of jurisdictions are seeing more and more individuals having to rely on puffers, on inhalers; more and more attacks; more and more urgent care visits, even to the point where the incidence of these conditions is increasing at an astronomical, tsunami level. In Canada itself two million Canadians as of this moment have asthma, and the number continues to rise. The number rising in countries which do not have greenhouse gas emissions legislation is astronomical, exponential, comparatively.

All of these reasons speak to why we need to support these bills.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to comment and commend the member from Perth–Wellington on his dissertation on Bill 172, and also thank him for recommending and mentioning my bill, Bill 76, which is going to be at committee this week. It is a tangible way to reduce greenhouse gases. It's in effect already in jurisdictions in Quebec. There are trucks that come every day into the city of Toronto from Robert Transport that are powered by LNG, liquid natural gas. A number of facilities, a number of municipalities in Ontario—Hamilton, for one—power their garbage trucks by compressed natural gas, CNG. So this is a tangible, real-life way that we could reduce greenhouse gases. It can work.

I'm looking forward to the committee. There are a number of major companies that are going to come and present this Wednesday and on March 23. I look forward to input from the other two parties as well. I think that this is a way that government, either with my bill or amendments to my bill or part of their own bill, could actually help industries who want to make improvements to do that.

It's not just truck traffic. It's open to marine traffic and also rail traffic. CN and CP are already doing experiments and looking at something like this.

This is a way that the opposition and both parties—the third party, ourselves and the government—could work together. You could extend the message to industry. It's not punitive. It's something that industry wants to do. They just need some reassurance from government that they're not going to move in in a taxation position if they were to go to LNG. It's going to be a little more expensive for these motors, but through taxation and through measures like that that's where we could reduce the cost to those motors.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and look forward to Wednesday.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** While the NDP supports cap and trade as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we want to ensure that it's a system that is actually going to work for everyone. We want it to be a fair system, an effective system and a transparent system.

If you look at what has been presented to us in this piece of legislation, the government has proposed to give all large emitters, not just trade-exposed emitters, a four-year exemption from paying the carbon emissions while little Ontarians, some of whom live on very low incomes as we've heard in debate around the seniors drug' issues, will have to start paying as soon as January 1, 2017. That does not seem in any way to me equitable or fair.

We know that Ontario is competing in a very difficult world right now. But unless these exemptions are being allocated in some way—we know how long these exemptions are actually going to last—it's really the little guy that's going to pay the freight.

The other piece is that, although the government says that it is going to dedicate these funds to greenhouse gas emissions, there isn't anything in this legislation that

gives us any satisfaction that that in fact will be the case. In fact, even the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, is questioning whether or not these funds will actually go to projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions or whether they'll just go into the general government slush fund.

There are a lot more questions to be answered than there is currently in this document before us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Perth–Wellington for his reply.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I want to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Etobicoke North, Sarnia–Lambton and—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Welland.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** And Welland. I'm sorry; I didn't write that down.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Oh. Anyway, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I certainly agree with you about the inspection issues here. This is going to be another Liberal bureaucracy set-up. We've seen how things were handled in the past, certainly with some of the issues and investigations going on with this government right now, and what can happen.

To the member from Etobicoke North, nobody disagrees with what's going on in the rest of the world. I haven't been to the Far East, but I've certainly seen pictures of it, and it's terrible over there. Nobody disagrees that we've got to be careful with our climate.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton—a great bill, and we need to get this looked at. But that's what innovation can do. If you give people the help, they can invent technology and grow their businesses with initiatives like the member from Sarnia–Lambton puts forth in his bill. But this government doesn't understand things like this because this government has devised a scheme to bring in billions of dollars on the backs of Ontario taxpayers. That's all this is. It's going to be more expensive to live in Ontario with this energy bill.

1620

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** As always, I'm honoured to be called upon to speak in Ontario's provincial Parliament on a very important issue to the residents of my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh.

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas, will enact the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. Allow me to state, right at the beginning of this presentation, Speaker, that New Democrats in this House would be supporting a cap-and-trade bill to combat climate change if the language was improved. We will be suggesting a number of ways that this bill can be improved in order to gain wider acceptance by the voters in this province. We want a system that is seen to be fair, effective and transparent, and I'll return to those themes throughout my discussion here this afternoon.

I wasn't here in the House back in 2007. That's when the Liberals introduced an action plan to deal with



climate change. I wasn't here in the fall of 2009, either. That, as you know, Speaker, is when the Liberal government of the day first announced the cap-and-trade bill to deal with climate change.

Let's skip back to 2007. The Liberal environment minister was Laurel Broten from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. She got the Liberal ball rolling on climate change. She was replaced in the environment portfolio by the member from Kingston and the Islands, Mr. Gerretsen, who said climate change was his government's most critical priority and absolutely had to be dealt with. That was back in 2009, Speaker. Mr. Gerretsen passed the environmental baton to John Wilkinson, the former member from Perth–Wellington. The esteemed member from St. Catharines, the dean of the Ontario Legislature, the current deputy House leader and minister without portfolio, Mr. Bradley, walked in the environmental footsteps of Mr. Wilkinson. This brings us to today and this bill, Bill 172, introduced by my friend the member from Toronto Centre, Mr. Murray.

Speaker, as you know, Minister Murray is a former mayor of Winnipeg, and I must say—and he would be the first to tell you this, Speaker—he's a former New Democrat. New Democrats at the municipal, provincial and federal levels have always been environmental champions. We believe in combating greenhouse gases and climate change. We also insist that any tax and cap-and-trade policy must make sense. It must be fair, effective and transparent.

We accept that climate change is real. We accept that impacts from human-induced climate change are being felt the world over. We accept that if world leaders don't get their act together on this problem and if the planet's average temperature jumps by two degrees Celsius, irreversible harm will occur.

That's why it is so important and so vital that we get this bill right, that we take the politics out of the legislation and that we all work together on improving the language in this bill—not for ourselves, but for the generations who will follow us.

Speaker, let me just touch for a moment on a generation which came before us. My riding of Windsor–Tecumseh was formerly known as Windsor–Riverside and Sandwich–Riverside. From 1967 to 1977, it was held by a visionary named Fred Burr. He was one of the first environmentalists to serve in this provincial Parliament. I know the member from St. Catharines will remember Fred Burr as being ahead of his time by talking about mercury poisoning in Ontario's lakes and rivers and by being the first to talk about the dangers of side-stream or second-hand tobacco smoke.

Speaker, let me quote from Fred Burr's inaugural address to this House back in 1968. He was warning us then about the dangers we faced if we didn't take action to combat air pollution.

Fred Burr, in 1968—nearly 50 years ago—said, “Mankind will die of massive epidemics of respiratory diseases and suffocation within the next hundred years. There is an aerial sewer 12 to 14 miles thick all around

the Earth and there is just no more space to dump this pollution in the” atmosphere.

Air pollution destroys our atmosphere, and climate change is a threat to us all. Many of us say that we must do something about it. But when we take action, as this bill purports to do, we must do so in a way that we can all understand. We must justify our actions with proof that the money we're taking for these actions is accounted for in a transparent fashion.

We can't allow the big polluters to get away with it without paying their fair share. We can't allow the funds we collect to be administered by an appointed body without any proper financial oversight by Ontario's Auditor General. We must have the entire cap-and-trade program studied and tested for its efficiencies by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. We—all of us, every man, woman and child in Ontario—must know what bang we're getting for our buck. We must be satisfied and convinced that the money collected is not just being used as a Liberal slush fund by the Liberal government.

If this government is true to its word—and how many times have we heard the Premier say that she wanted to run a government that is open and transparent and accountable? That is a familiar refrain in this House, Speaker. The previous Liberal administration of former Premier McGuinty was anything but, and the proof of that is in the gas plant scandals, the deletion of evidence from the computer files, the unaccountable tendering of the eHealth file and the financial unaccountability of the Ornge air ambulance service.

The Premier said that we had turned a corner in this province. Of course, that was before she changed her mind and started the sell-off of Hydro One, something she said she'd never do, something 80% of the people in the province are opposed to, something 200 municipal councils have passed motions in opposition to.

But I digress, Speaker. If the Premier and her cabinet, and my good Liberal friends who, like me, are not favoured by a seat on the front bench, really want to prove that they are part of an open and transparent administration, they will accept the changes that we on this side are proposing, so we will all be more comfortable in supporting real change to combat global warming and climate change.

Please don't try to pull the wool over our eyes. Don't ask us to trust that you have our best interests at heart and would never take our money and use it for something it wasn't meant for. Let the legislative experts—the Environmental Commissioner, the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer—have input, invite them to scrutinize this new plan and justify it to the people of Ontario. If you have nothing to hide, don't try to hide it.

Make sure that the less well-off in this province are not penalized. Low-income households, people living in the north and families in remote areas need special consideration. This new system must be fair, effective and transparent.

New Democrats want a cap-and-trade system that is fair, that is effective and that is transparent. So far, this bill doesn't pass the smell test.

Representatives of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce will be here on the 4th of April, meeting with us to discuss their concerns with this bill. I've scheduled my meeting with the chamber delegation already. The chamber has a serious concern with this bill, and it's over the changes that we have been calling for, Speaker.

A chamber document says, "Cap-and-trade proceeds should not be directed into general government revenue." The chamber also states, "It is important that the allocation of the revenue be objective and transparent." I couldn't agree more.

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Climate change is too important to each and every one of us to start down this road before we have made the right and proper choices. We cannot afford to make mistakes when we design this legislation. We can't allow the perception that the wool is being pulled over the public's eyes. We must be upfront, we must be open to scrutiny, and our decisions and results must be publicly evaluated by the legislative experts whom we have hired to make us all accountable.

If there is nothing to hide—if this is not a cash grab—then do the proper thing with this bill. Insist that the Auditor General have access to the information. Insist that the Environmental Commissioner be allowed to examine the books and the results of decisions made to combat climate change. Make sure that the Financial Accountability Officer can have a say as well. Don't ask us to accept this on trust or blind faith, because no one on this side of the House will do that.

We've learned from your mistakes. We hope that you have learned from your past mistakes as well. Open and accountable government that is transparent and justifiable is a goal we should all have. We should set aside our political differences on this file, but we can't do that if you won't be open with us and the public on how much money you are collecting, where it is being spent to fight climate change, global warming and cleaning up our air, and what the results are of those efforts. Are we making a difference? Are we spending the money in the right places? Is there more we can do? Or are you just grabbing this money and using it for projects that you've had on the books for some time, and then, with a paper shuffle, pretending you're good stewards of our tax dollars because the provincial books are in better shape than a year ago, because of the money you've raised under the pretension of actually fighting climate change?

Honesty, as they say, is the best policy. Honesty comes from being open and transparent. Honesty comes from being fair to everyone, especially the lowest-income earners and those living in remote areas. Rebates are given to low-income families where they have similar bills in Alberta and British Columbia. California sees to it that a designated percentage of the revenues derived from cap-and-trade legislation is directed to the programs that service and benefit disadvantaged communities. If

they can do these things in California and British Columbia and Alberta, why aren't we doing it here? Change the language in this bill; make it fair and transparent and effective for us all.

Honesty is when your decision-making has effective results that can be justified to the public so that we all feel good about what we're doing; or, at least, we feel better about what we're doing because a cloud of secrecy has been lifted. We can't do this behind closed doors, with no accountability to the public. We must do better than that. Don't allow the whispers to gain weight that this bill is designed to be no more than a government slush fund. Open the books to us all; put it in writing now. Open the books and prove to the public that these are wise decisions. I tell you, if you don't—if this bill isn't improved, if you fail to be open and transparent and effective—you will not gain the public trust and you will pay the political price.

Many people in this province are looking at this bill with a suspicious eye. Some may be in favour of spending a little more money at the pumps to fight climate change, but they don't want to be taken for granted, and they don't want to be taken in either. They don't want this Liberal government to use the money they raise at the pumps—an extra 4.3 cents a litre, at least in the beginning of it. They don't want that money used as a cash grab by the Liberals to bail the government out of debt. They don't want to be taken advantage of. They don't want to pay for past expensive mistakes made by this Liberal government. That's why we in the NDP say that changes have to be made in this legislation so that the language is seen to be fair, effective and transparent.

There was a poll published last week—I hope the Liberals in the House are taking note if they haven't already—done by Forum Research, mentioned in a column in the *Toronto Star* by Thomas Walkom. That poll shows that 68% of the people in this province disapprove of the Liberal plan on cap-and-trade because it will mean we're all paying a higher price for gasoline and higher prices for those who use home heating oil. I hope the Liberals are getting the message, Speaker. You haven't sold this new idea very well, and it can't be sold to the people in this province without changes to make it be seen to be fair, effective and transparent.

The people in this province have gone through five Liberal Ministers of the Environment since they initiated the conversation leading up to this piece of legislation. I have faith in the latest minister, Mr. Murray, and I know that the environment minister is now called the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. There are a lot of good orators in this House, some more theatrical than others, and we have a very few passionate ones. In my humble opinion, few can match the passion that this minister has when he speaks about the need to tackle this issue head-on. He gets it. He knows what will happen if Ontario isn't a major player with climate change and global warming.

His legislation, in order to be truly successful and appreciated, has to be supported by a majority of the



residents of Ontario. Right now, that isn't the case, and it may never be the case if we don't show them that their concerns have been heard and that this program will fall under the scrutiny of the Auditor General, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Financial Accountability Officer. That's a short list. There may be one or two others who should be granted oversight as well, but let's start there. Let's make this legislation fair, effective and transparent.

New Democrats want the money collected for this purpose to flow into a separate account that is audited in a very public way so that everyone is aware of the projects which are funded by this money and how greenhouse gas reductions were measured, what results were achieved, and how they were verified and scrutinized by the Auditor General, the Environmental Commissioner and the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario. That's not a lot to ask, in my humble opinion. I say change the language and improve the bill, or risk all of what's left of your credibility with the voters of Ontario.

Speaking of credibility, I was reading some of the press clippings coming out of the Conservative convention in Ottawa last weekend. Earlier, I suggested that we set aside our political differences so we could all seek out ways to improve this legislation. I learned this morning that that may very well be more difficult than I had imagined. I read in the *Globe and Mail* that the member from Simcoe North, Mr. Brown, the leader of the official opposition, had no sooner announced support for a revenue-neutral carbon pricing plan than my friend from Toronto Centre, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Mr. Murray, sent out a number of tweets. In one, Mr. Brown was called a climate denier. Of course, that may have been because the minister didn't like his proposed bill to be labelled a slush fund and a cash grab by the leader of the official opposition.

According to the *Toronto Star*, the minister called on the Leader of the Opposition to flesh out the details of the Conservative plan. Speaker, it is unfortunate we can't seem to play nice together in the same playground at times, but, as I said earlier, this issue is too important for us to be playing these silly political games.

New Democrats are interested in working with the minister and suggesting ways that this bill can be improved in order that it becomes more open, understandable, accountable, transparent and effective. The minister may feel it's that way already, but a vast majority of the people in this province don't feel the same way about Bill 172 as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change feels about his own bill.

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That being said, I would hope the minister and his Liberal colleagues would agree to work with our energy critic, the member from Toronto-Danforth, Mr. Tabuns, and indeed all of us here in the NDP caucus to fashion a better bill. Unfortunately, at this point, the bill hasn't been sold to the public very well. It's been seen more as a bully bill, and bully bills will never win support from the majority of the voters.

I hope my friends in the official opposition can see their way fit to offer practical solutions as well. Let's all of us, for once, work together and show the people in this province that we can do that when the stakes are high and the issues are too important for partisan shots and political gamesmanship. I know we can do it if we put our minds to it; it just takes the political will to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I am delighted for this opportunity to respond to the comments made by the member from Windsor-Tecumseh. We heard from the environmental critic earlier about these three pillars: a fair, efficient and transparent system. I welcome very much his enthusiasm to work with the government closely to improve the bill. I would make that commitment. I am always listening to opportunities to make the bill better, and certainly we'll continue to keep the kinds of great suggestions that are coming forward in mind as we move forward.

The polling issues: You talk about the polls, but I think that poll was extremely misleading, because it basically asked the question: "Do you want to see your energy rates go up?"—without showing the other side of the equation. When I made my introductory remarks a week ago, I talked at length about the polls in my riding, where 87% of the people agreed with the cap-and-trade program. Across the province, it was closer to 79% who think that this is the right direction to go, and not the kind of program that we were going to see from the Leader of the Opposition as he announced over the weekend—a tax-and-dividend type of scheme.

The reality is, I think the opposition party, to their credit, is responding in a favourable way by testing the air and testing the waters, and saying, "You know what? Ontario is behind this. If we have any chance of forming the next government, we need to get behind cap-and-trade." As uncomfortable as it may make so many members of their party feel, they're getting behind it.

We know that we have the support of the third party to work forward. I agree with the notion of the member for Windsor-Tecumseh to depoliticize this as much as possible so that we can move forward and have the best possible bill coming out of this.

He quickly referenced the minister's conversion from the NDP to the Liberals. I'm reminded of Churchill's quote, which said that a man, when he's young, who isn't a member of a socialist party has no heart, but the man who continues to be a member in later life has no common sense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Mr. Speaker, I see this bill as very flawed, and pretty obviously it's about the money. The government has defined in their budget that this bill is expected to generate for them \$1.9 billion in the first year, 2017. They are planning on a decrease in the cap of carbon dioxide by 4% to 5% a year, going right out to 2050, so we will have a target of 80% less carbon dioxide produced compared to 1990.

This is going to increasingly put more and more pressure on companies to make the products they produce—in this case, it would seem gasoline, diesel and home heating fuel are the most obvious ones; there are exemptions for some of the other large companies, for the time being. It's going to make life more expensive in the province of Ontario for companies doing business and producing the things that Ontarians need. It's going to make life more expensive for consumers in Ontario and the citizens of Ontario to buy the basic things they need and the energy they need; in this case, to drive their cars and heat their homes.

They've already been coping with and faced with the highest electricity costs in the world because of another Liberal bill, the green energy bill, which has wrongly driven up the price of electricity to the highest in North America. It has had the effect of driving jobs out of North America, causing unemployment, and impoverishing people with very high monthly bills. This is going to be more of the same. It's going to reduce carbon dioxide because it's going to remove companies because they won't be able to afford to do business here, just as the Green Energy Act has done. Ontario will become a bleaker and more dismal place, and an undesirable place to live and do business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Thanks, Speaker. I'd like to commend the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. It's amazing that, in 1968, Mr. Burr stood up in this House and warned us—him and a lot of other people at the time—about what could happen down the road. With all fairness to the member of Etobicoke North, he even stood up and said, “Just travel around the world and look at the airshed. It's terrible.” So I guess Mr. Burr was way ahead of his time.

Do you know what? I commend the government for doing something, but you've got to understand that if we don't get countries like China and India on board—two thirds of the pollution is coming from there. Until we can get the bigger nations to co-operate on the airshed, we're going to have a real uphill battle. But we've got to start somewhere, so I give them credit that they're doing something.

Once again, when we get to these bills and it goes to second reading—and I'm sure it'll pass with all-party support—it'll go to committee. But so many times since I've been here, I've seen it go to committee, and the ruling party has more members on the committee and they have a tendency to go ahead with what they want to do regardless of what the people of Ontario think or regardless of what the opposition parties think. They go ahead and push it through the way they've set it up. Very seldom, they're open for amendments, and it's a very few times that we get amendments. As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh stated, this is something that affects us all: our grandchildren and everyone who comes after us. We have to do something now before—some scientists say it is too late, and that's unfortunate. But maybe

something done now may salvage a few more centuries out of this planet.

We definitely have to do something and we have to do it fast. The sooner we set an example for the rest of the Legislatures throughout the world to do this, the better.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to respond to the remarks from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh on our cap-and-trade bill. As I've been talking to people since this bill was tabled, I'm finding a lot of interest in it. People are saying, “How does this work?” I find that one of the most important things is that they realize that there are some fees involved and there will be some proceeds that flow to the government. The thing that they're really interested in is the assurance that, right in the law, we actually will be setting up a separate account, the greenhouse gas reduction account, which is where any of the fee revenue will go. Any revenue from fees will not go into general revenue; it will go into the greenhouse gas reduction account.

In fact, it's actually right in the act. The bill sets out the types of initiatives that may be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account established from cap-and-trade proceeds. Initiatives must be reasonably likely to reduce or support the reduction of greenhouse gases to be eligible to be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account.

An initiative could be in a variety of areas. It could be related to reduced energy use. It could be related to more efficient buildings and land use. It could be related to infrastructure around, for example, transportation that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It could have to do with helping industry, agriculture or forestry reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It could have to do with waste management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from waste management, or—near and dear to me—education, training, research and innovation. Those are all the things that we would be interested in—making sure we reduce greenhouse gases.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's our last question or comment. I return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh to reply.

1650

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** The member for Beaches–East York gave a quotation from Winston Churchill. Mr. Churchill had a lot of good quotes. Another one I'll throw back is that Mr. Churchill had a few drinks in him at a party, and a woman came up to him and said, “Mr. Churchill, you are very, very drunk,” and Winston Churchill said, “Yes, and you are very ugly, and tomorrow I'll be sober.” Winston Churchill was very colourful, and you had a good, colourful quote.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills talked about how expensive this bill could be, but I say to the member: My friend, if we don't take action now, if we don't take steps to combat climate change and global warming, how expensive will it be for all of us down the



road just with our own bad health effects that we'll get if we don't start cleaning up the air?

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek talked about Fred Burr, a real gentleman. I know the member from St. Catharines, when Mr. Burr passed away, paid a really nice tribute to him in the House. I appreciate that very much.

The Minister of Education: All I can say, Minister, is that you just have to do a better job of convincing the voters in Ontario that this separate account is going to be separate, and that it's going to be audited by the Auditor General and by the Financial Accountability Officer. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is going to have a look in there and see if we're really getting a bang for our buck, if we're really showing in a transparent fashion that what we're doing is for the best interests of it all: This is how we spent the money; this is why we spent the money; these are the results we have achieved by spending the money that we're taking from your wallet every time you put gasoline in the car, or every time, for those with heat other than electricity—home oil or propane—we drive up their bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'll be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa–Orléans and the Chair of Cabinet.

It gives me pleasure to speak about our future when it comes to climate change. What we're here to do is to make sure that our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids have a place where they can live, breathe, play, work and enjoy life. Sometimes, as I said a minute ago, it does take time for the public to accept major shifts—this one, in particular, with the environment.

I want to use a couple of personal examples, and I think some of the members in this House have heard me mention this before.

Back some 30 years ago when my kids were still young—now they are all gone; they're adults with kids of their own—the discussion around the kitchen table at night was, "What did you do at school today?" Frankly, one day one of my sons said, "Well, Dad, we talked about recycling and how we need to sort things," and all those kinds of things.

Well, I'm not afraid to admit it. I lived out in the country where we had a burn barrel in the back. I'm sure most of us who live out in the country did as well. I said to my wife, "I thought school was to teach kids how to read and write, math, history and all those things, yet they're talking about garbage."

Fast-forward some 35 years later and it's become a common household thing that we do today; we would not look at it any other way. Change is difficult at times, but I think that we need to think a little bit forward and make sure that we do that kind of planning.

Secondly, I want to talk about one of my grandkids. About a year ago we were driving through Trenton, where we have a Norampac paper recycling plant. I was with my grandson, who was probably about nine at that time. There was what he called smoke coming out of a

smokestack, and he said, "Grandpa, look at the smoke coming out of the smokestack. That's not good for the environment." So Grandpa, knowing better, said, "Well, A.J., that's not smoke; that's steam," because I know Norampac uses a steam reformer to process the paper to recycle. He went quiet for a little bit, and then he said, "Grandpa, you can spin it whichever way you want. It's still stuff going into the air and it's not good for the environment." I take great pride in having a lesson from my 10-year-old grandson.

This is something that I just wanted to talk a little bit about since the bill was introduced and the budget was introduced dealing with cap and trade. I'd be remiss if I did not say that some people in my riding question the direction we're going, that possibly gasoline and natural gas might increase in cost—to try to protect the environment. But I'm quite surprised, actually, by the number of people who know that this is something that we need to do. After we have a little chat, it is encouraging to know that they do understand.

Of course, it's something that you cannot touch and feel right away. As a society, when we spend a dollar we want to be able to count the widgets that that dollar buys. But it is interesting today how much more people accept the fact that we need to deal with our environment in a way that protects us.

I just want to add to the conversation a couple of quotes. Some leaders in industry—for example, David Paterson, vice-president, corporate and environmental affairs, for General Motors Canada, said when we announced the cap-and-trade program, "GM Canada sees tackling climate change as both a necessity and an economic opportunity. As Ontario moves to place a value on carbon, we will work together and support the development of market mechanisms that are effective, protect our manufacturing competitiveness and support consumers interested in adopting new technologies, like our Chevrolet electric vehicles."

I've got other quotes here—but as we move toward this environment, I think we need to be really, really cognizant.

I heard some of the previous debates, where we said, "Well, there are other parts of the world that are not doing anything, or doing very, very little." It's true. It is true, which is unfortunate, but the reality is that we cannot afford to sit idle waiting for somebody else to do it for us. I think we need to show some leadership.

Ontario is not the only one. The majority of people in Canada—after this piece of legislation comes into play, on January 1, 2017, over 80% of Canadians will be under some kind of carbon-control mechanisms. I'm not so sure that we need to wait for China or India to come on board. I'm delighted to see that they are seeing the light, that they are recognizing that they need to do something, and that is really, really encouraging.

I would just say that we need to move forward in a measured way—and I think we're doing that—and we need to pass this legislation, because the longer we wait, the worse we get.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Ottawa—Orléans.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I'm very proud to rise today and speak to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, an act that my constituents of Ottawa—Orléans are very interested in seeing passed to protect our environment.

Last week, the official opposition critic for the environment and climate change brought up some points that I would like to address today. She stated that "Ontario's global share of greenhouse gas emissions is about 0.38%." There are a few things wrong with the logic of this. If everyone said that they were simply less than 1% of the problem, then every jurisdiction would continue to increase greenhouse gases and contribute to climate change. It would be similar to having 0.38% of my yearly crop fail due to a disease, and saying that we don't need to do anything about the disease because it is costly to fix.

In fact, Canada as a whole contributes 1.6% of GHG worldwide. There are more than 100 nations in the world, so our per capita emissions put the country in the top 10 list of global polluters.

1700

I also want to point out that we reached a terrifying milestone in global warming last week. Eric Holthaus, a meteorologist reporting on satellite image results and data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, reported in *Slate* magazine on the dramatic new record that we just set. He stated: "It appears that average temperatures across the northern hemisphere have breached the two degrees Celsius above 'normal' mark for the first time in recorded history, and likely the first time since human civilization began thousands of years ago."

The two-degree mark was the agreed-upon climate change goal for the nations of the globe and the mark that climate change scientists set as the demarcation line for massive environmental disruption and change. We just briefly hit that mark last week.

We must also realize the climate change impact on our safety and our economy. The damages from abnormal weather events—events caused by climate change—have cost Ontario, I would say, close to \$1 billion in the past five years alone. In 2011, a tornado tore through beautiful downtown Goderich. Unfortunately, this tornado injured 37 people and, sadly, took the life of one. Economically, the damage to the town was nearly \$130 million. In 2013, a torrential downpour slammed Toronto, causing a significant amount of damage across the city. The total cost, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, topped \$850 million. So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there are so many reasons why we must act and why we must act now to make sure that the polluters are those that pay.

Over the weekend, the Leader of the Opposition stated he would be in favour of supporting a carbon tax. There are a few curious things about this statement.

Firstly, if this was the true belief of the leader, then why did he not once stand up for Ontarians and the en-

vironment when he was a member of the Harper government?

Secondly, while the party opposite talks about our plan, where are the specifics about their climate change plan?

Thirdly, what the opposition is proposing seems to me as taxing everyone, Mr. Speaker.

Our bill, Bill 172, if passed, would set up a cap-and-trade initiative that would see reductions in GHGs. The cap-and-trade system would make sure that polluters pay a price if they do not meet the targeted reductions. Subsequently, the revenue generated would go to a transparent fund that sets up nine different schedules for the use of the fund. Through the greenhouse gas reduction account, the government will reduce greenhouse gases through initiatives related to land use and buildings, waste management, research and innovation, and energy use—just to name a few of the nine different schedules.

Upgrading and transforming our public transit system helps everyone reduce their individual carbon footprint while equally reducing traffic congestion. The use of this fund can spur economic growth, and, as seen in other jurisdictions, cap and trade is a good system.

While the opposition is decrying the fund that will be set up, all projects that will be funded out of that will need to produce a reduction of greenhouse gases or they will not be eligible to be funded. These investments can help encourage growth, spur the economy and help out our environment.

Therefore, as most members can see, the cost of inaction is great. If we do not do something, we will continue to be part of the problem and we will pass a world of possible environmental chaos on to our children. As a mother, Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is my duty to do something to help her future.

So I encourage all members of this Legislature to support our initiative because, if we're trying to do nothing, if we don't try to save anything, I'm not sure that the environment will be there for our future generations.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Chair of Cabinet.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm delighted to offer a few words about this particular piece of legislation, which I think is both progressive and responsible.

I must say that on the weekend, I could feel the ground shaking. I think it hit 6.0, 6.1 or 6.2 on the Richter scale. Something had happened around Ottawa. I thought it was perhaps an earthquake that had happened and I thought, "Was that a result of global warming? Was that a result of climate change?" Indeed, it was not. It was, instead, the Leader of the Opposition saying the words "carbon tax" to the people of the province of Ontario—carbon pricing. Apparently, the seismic action that took place was the number of people falling off their chairs at the convention at the thought that there was going to be a major change in Conservative policy.

I welcome it. I must say I welcome it because—not you of course; you're neutral in the Chair—some of your colleagues who sit on the other side were what I would



call climate change deniers, and they have denounced this government. As late as last week, they were denouncing the government over the thought that perhaps a price would be put on carbon and that that money could be reinvested to ensure the environment was being protected in this province. So I welcome that change.

Some people call it a flip-flop; I don't like doing that. I simply note from biblical times—because a few people over there are aware of what happened in biblical times—the road to Damascus was a place where there was a conversion taking place. It appears that not only the road to Damascus from biblical times but the road to Ottawa represented a change. That's something I guess I should think of as positive, although, with all the denying that took place in the first place, I don't know whether there's credibility there, particularly when I look back and see the history of some members of the Legislature and where they happened to be when they had an opportunity to speak out in favour of the environment and were perhaps part of a group that was anything but in favour of the environment. So I look at that and say that one must take that into consideration.

While I welcome the support of the New Democratic Party, it has its caveats in it. It says, "We want to look more at the legislation in detail. We want to ensure that all of the funding that would be derived from the cap-and-trade system would be put back into environmental initiatives which would be positive for planet Earth, and specifically the province of Ontario and our country of Canada." I welcome the member for Toronto–Danforth, who, in a lengthy speech in the Legislature, detailed as it was, indicated his general support for legislation of this kind. The New Democratic Party is onside with that.

I will be looking with interest on how the official opposition will actually vote on this legislation when it comes down to voting for something that would improve the environment considerably. That's something I'll wait to see. It may happen or may not happen.

There's no question that there is a problem out there that exists and that bold initiatives are going to have to be taken. The easiest thing is to wait and blame somebody else. There's a lot of blame to go around. I think my previous colleagues who have spoken mentioned that in some other jurisdictions, they aren't moving as rapidly as we would like to see the people moving in other parts of the world. That's not an excuse for us not to be moving forward with those countries in the world and with those subnational jurisdictions which are taking action to improve the environment.

One of the things that I have noted—and I've got to admit to even being surprised by it. The member who sits opposite me from St. Thomas is well aware of this because he has raised the issue of asthma and issues of that nature. Last year, I cannot recall a smog day in the province of Ontario. I can remember when smog days were quite common in the summer. You would drive into the city of Toronto, come into the city of Toronto on public transit or whatever way you come into Toronto, and there would be smog right over the city and often

right down to the Niagara Peninsula. I can recall the coal-fired plant in Nanticoke when it was pouring out pollution. You would see this yellow stream across the sky over the Niagara Peninsula and that would be pollution going not only on the Niagara Peninsula and Ontario, but also our friends in Buffalo, who noted that there was some considerable pollution coming.

**1710**

There was a great financial penalty to pay in this. Now that we're not generating electricity using coal, it is more expensive in terms of the actual production of electrical power. If all people want to look at is the cost—there are some people who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. Speaking to those individuals who know only that, the cost to the health care system was very heavy, I must say. Such groups as the Ontario Medical Association pleaded with government to tackle the issue of smog, which is related at least to the issue of global warming.

As a result of a number of initiatives that have been taken, we see that now in the province of Ontario, last year, we had no smog days. That's very positive. I don't have those respiratory problems that some people have had, but I recall living in the city of Sudbury way back, when the smoke—it was called smoke then—would come over the city and people were literally choking on the sulphur, which is sulphur dioxide, coming over the city. The west end of the city was dead in terms of vegetation.

That has changed considerably now. The first solution was to build a smokestack and send it to Sturgeon Falls. That was not a solution. But the second was a major initiative taken by the Peterson government to deal with the issue of acid rain, which cut those emissions by over three quarters and, as a result, we see a greening of Sudbury.

I'm optimistic, that with an initiative of this kind, two things will happen. It will stimulate certain parts of the economy considerably, those which are related to the environment. The second will protect us from a problem I think most people in the world now concede is happening, even the deniers south of the border; some of those individuals are now conceding that it is a problem, and we hope this legislation will assist in overcoming that problem.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'm pleased to add my comments to the speeches given by the members from Northumberland–Quinte West and Ottawa–Orléans, and the Chair of the Cabinet.

The words "trust" and "transparency" were used throughout these speeches, and I wonder how many OPP investigations it takes to get this government to be transparent. We have three going on right now, and we certainly had an issue in the by-election up north. This is what is troubling the voters of this province.

Some 68% of people in Ontario, I believe it was stated, do not believe the government on their cap-and-

trade initiative. This problem gets right back to transparency. We've seen too many schemes in the past initiated by this government where the money has not gone where it's supposed to go. If this was a system of helping the people in Ontario with their gas heating bills and stuff like that, maybe people could buy into this thing. But this is a cash grab, pure and simple. This money can be used for things other than what the government is talking about.

I would also like to mention to the Chair of the Cabinet that if he wants to see the road to Damascus, he just has to come out to Wellington county, and I can show him that road because it goes to a little town called Damascus.

I also think that all members in this House should thank Elizabeth Witmer for her initiation in getting the coal gas plants shut down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** It's always a pleasure to rise and make a few brief comments.

We know already that we're hearing from Ontario families who are really concerned about this piece of legislation and how it's actually going to impact them. While the NDP certainly supports a fair, effective and transparent cap-and-trade system, there are a lot of unanswered questions here.

We met today with the Environmental Commissioner. We actually had a little bit of discussion with her. This piece of legislation completely omits any mention of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and whether she'll have access to the data or the information she needs to actually write reports on this cap-and-trade system when it's implemented.

She did tell us she has the right to subpoena whatever information she wants, but it seems to me and certainly to the NDP that she shouldn't have to subpoena information. That information should be readily available to her. It's she and her staff who actually get to make the decision on what they're going to write reports on.

On the issue of transparency, this is a repeat of the Hydro One sell-off, where we see a private corporation potentially being responsible for this cap-and-trade system as well. We see none of the eight commissioners of the Legislative Assembly having any oversight whatsoever for the Hydro One sell-off piece, nor will they have any oversight for this arm's-length agency that they plan to hand the system off to.

I think it's unacceptable that we're implementing increases to the taxpayers of this province while we're not implementing anything for the polluters, as the member from Ottawa-Orléans called for, for four years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Beaches-East York.

*Applause.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Thank you to my colleagues for applauding.

It gives me unbelievable pleasure to be able to respond to my seatmate, the member from Northumberland-

Quinte West, on his comments, and our government whip, and now I see the Chair of the Cabinet commenting on this particular piece of legislation. I have the privilege, of course, of acting as the PA for environment, which is why I get this great opportunity to respond more often than not to these.

We heard from the member from Northumberland-Quinte West about how it is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Typically, I am in agriculture most of the time, but they've asked me to help out on this because some others weren't capable. But put that aside a little bit.

The member from Northumberland-Quinte West reminds us all about that great quote, "Out of the mouths of babes oft times comes great wisdom." Your nephew is absolutely—

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Grandson.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Grandson. It's absolutely true that if it's going up, it's just full of CO<sub>2</sub>, and he saw it better than anyone would have seen it. It's there and it needs to be addressed and needs to be looked after.

Of course, our government whip talked a lot about the greenhouse gas reduction account. This is revenue-neutral in a sense that the money that is raised into the account gets spent back out in programs that are being helpful to Ontarians across the province—in renovation tax credits, buying hybrid vehicles and investing in infrastructure hybrids, and that's so extremely important.

But then I'd also like to comment to the Chair of the Cabinet. This particular member has presided over some of the greatest environmental changes that have happened in this province going back to his time as Minister of the Environment in the Peterson government, when we brought in the Blue Box Program under his watch, a world-renowned program duplicated across North America and Europe. This man, this member, you'll remember, brought in all the changes that addressed pollution and acid rain and made fundamental changes to emissions in this province. It was one of the greatest programs to stop polluters from putting this in the air and improving the environment. My kudos to him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Mr. Speaker, I don't know how to follow that, but my accolades to the Chair of the Cabinet as well.

We've heard a lot of debate here today about a lot of things, but I think I want to go back to something that will really reduce greenhouse gases, and that's a bill that's going to be debated this week at committee, Bill 76, my private member's bill. Like they always say, you've got to promote yourself, right?

That's a bill that would actually do something. It would reduce greenhouse gases. It would encourage industry to make those types of changes, whether it's rail transport or marine transport. It would lead to the creation of jobs in Ontario because it would build up an LNG facility in Ontario, probably in my riding of Sarnia—



Lambton, to be parochial. I've got to mention Sarnia–Lambton. Bill Davis always used to mention Brampton; I've got to mention Sarnia–Lambton.

This would actually lead to a reduction in greenhouse gases. It would take a very minimal amount of tax dollars to do this, as far as the HST on the price of those motors, to encourage industry to make those types of changes. It's a positive thing that you could do. You could win industry over. Transport traffic is only about 3% of the traffic on the road, but it generates up to 30% of the greenhouse gases. It would certainly help reduce that kind of pollution that's out there now.

**1720**

The marine traffic is burning bunker C. They're ready to make those kinds of investments on those freighters on the Great Lakes. They're ready to make those changes; so are the freighters in the United States. This is something we can do.

It's already taking place in the United States. All kinds of infrastructure has been built in the United States. The province of Quebec has done the same. The 400-series of highways in Ontario, from Quebec to the Michigan border and New York, is the next stretch that needs to be done. This is happening today. Robert transport runs into Toronto every day with transports with LNG.

Let's make it happen. Support Bill 76. It will help support Bill 172.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments.

The Chair of Cabinet can respond.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Thanks to all the members who have responded. I want to concentrate on one particular response that I received. It opened the door to an interesting dialogue on this. That was the member for Perth–Wellington, who talked about something that happened in Sudbury: a by-election in Sudbury and an OPP investigation.

That opened the door to the fact that I can recall something that happened in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, where the Progressive Conservative Party needed a seat for its leader, John Tory—a good man and a good mayor of the city of Toronto. The party operatives went to the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and said, “We would like you to vacate your seat. As an exchange, we will give you a job with the Progressive Conservative caucus.” As time passed, the member actually left her seat. We know our friend as Laurie Scott. She left her seat, came to Queen's Park, got a good job here, and John Tory ran for that seat—not successfully, but he ran for that seat. Now, why was there not an OPP investigation in that situation that the member raised if there was an OPP investigation in the situation in Sudbury? Nobody actually got a job out of the situation in Sudbury, but somebody did get a job out of the situation in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

I wasn't going to raise the issue, but since he raised the issue, I want to know how one situation is not the same as the other. I think we all in this House like to say that turnabout is fair play, and we've had turnabout.

Anyway, I want to say that I have respected all the comments of the members. I think this is a good debate in the Legislature. I wish my friend from Sarnia–Lambton well in his particular bill, which deserves a lot of support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I'm proud to stand up and comment on Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, the bill that would amend the Environmental Protection Act by repealing the definition of “greenhouse gas.” It would also set up an emissions trading scheme passed by the Liberals in 2009. It would also set up a slush fund for this government to spend their money.

Mr. Speaker, before I start, I'd like to commend our critic for the environment, from Huron–Bruce, who's done an outstanding job pointing out the gaps and lack of oversight in this bill, which will only cost taxpayers dollars down the road.

I would also like to commend her on her hard-working defence that she undertakes every time the Minister of the Environment decides to attack her on Twitter instead of having a face-to-face conversation with her, which would be the proper way to deal with your opposition critic.

However, I do want to go forward and talk about what happened this weekend with our party. We opened up to create and look for policy throughout Ontario with a website, [forontario.ca](http://forontario.ca). We've invited everybody from across the province to log on to [forontario.ca](http://forontario.ca) and give their input—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize. The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London has the floor and I need to hear him.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll only be 20 minutes if they could hold their tongues for a little while.

So [forontario.ca](http://forontario.ca) has been set up for the people of this province to give feedback and opinion so that we can develop policy that resonates with Ontarians. It's consultation. It's something that this government has stopped doing for many years, as we've seen previously in the budget that is going to be passed this month and the fact that the finance committee has yet to finish the report, writing on the consultations they received, and that this budget has already been presented. I find it quite absurd that this government has walked away from consulting with Ontarians. The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the official opposition, has opened up that gate, and we're welcoming people from all walks of life to go on to [forontario.ca](http://forontario.ca) and give their comments and opinions so that we can form policy for the upcoming election.

Back to this Bill 172: We do have concerns with it. We have concerns that this act lacks accountability and creates a fund that is not transparent and that the Liberals will use to finance their pet projects. It is wrong for this government to create this unaccountable fund to pay for their years of scandal and mismanagement. We are

positively sure that this money will not go towards environmental progress, but instead will be used to pay for previous programs that this government has already committed and paid for.

Mr. Speaker, we do agree that action needs to be taken on greenhouse gases. However, simply to create a fund to go after taxpayers—a slush fund—is the wrong way to go about it. This government intends to get their cap-and-trade system up and running by January of next year. They have talked about creating a cap-and-trade fund since 2009. However, it seems to be rushing at the last moment in order to maximize the amount of money the slush fund will create. They've spent many months and many photo ops talking about a cap-and-trade scheme, but they have delivered few details. In fact, many farmers in my riding are quite concerned with the unknown that might be coming before them, because farmers are the true stewards of our environment and do take certain measures to mitigate their carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to mention other programs that this government could be utilizing to deal with high greenhouse gases and also improving the environment. It's something they have walked away from over the past few years, and it's quite important, in my riding especially.

I'm talking about utilizing conservation and wetlands. Ducks Unlimited is a great organization—I attend quite a number of their events in my riding and even attend the one in Toronto—for strong support for the protection of wetlands throughout this province. Wetlands are a great sink for carbon. They trap carbon from the environment naturally. They also act as a sponge to mitigate flooding. We mentioned earlier about Toronto having floods. Part of the problem in Toronto is there are no wetlands anymore. They've gotten rid of their wetlands that help mitigate that flooding. I don't know why this government couldn't invest more in wetlands, utilize wetlands. First, it's working with the landowners of this province, and, second, it would be decreasing the amount of carbon in the atmosphere. It's natural and it's not a costly burden on all Ontarians.

I brought up one of the reports, a comprehensive wetland policy summary and jurisdiction analysis, from Ducks Unlimited. It talks about each province that does invest in wetlands and has a comprehensive wetlands plan. Manitoba: yes. Alberta: yes. Nova Scotia: yes. Prince Edward Island: yes. New Brunswick: yes. Ontario: no. They have no overarching policy or framework for wetlands, no mitigation sequence. I find that quite concerning, that this government is pushing the big carbon and cap-and-trade environmental push, yet at the same time, they haven't planned for any process for dealing with the wetlands, the most natural way to deal with carbon in our system.

There are many organizations that are willing and able to help with regard to wetland preservation. We've got Ducks Unlimited, which, as I said, is a great organization; Nature Conservancy, which is really doing well; and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters—other

than farmers, probably the other greatest environmentalists are our anglers and hunters. They are the ones who want to preserve our natural environment in order to maintain the wildlife that are present throughout the communities.

1730

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. I read a report that also says that southern Ontario has lost 72% of its wetlands. That is quite a concern. That's quite a concern for all Ontarians, the fact that our natural wetlands, which are a great source of carbon sequestration, are lost. They also prevent the flooding.

The other program that would help with wetlands—and maybe the government could expand upon it—is the ALUS program. I don't know if you've heard of the ALUS program. There's a program in my riding in which the Ministry of Natural Resources works with the conservation authority to rehabilitate farmland that can no longer be farmed back into a habitat. It would either be good for bees or be good for wetlands. That is a great organization and a great program, which I hope is expanded beyond—I think it's in Norfolk county and Elgin county. The Long Point Region Conservation Authority is the head of that ALUS program.

That leads me into what this government did to the stewardship programs in this province. A stewardship program was a group of volunteers who were dedicated to the environmental land stewardship opportunities, with the advice to landowners, throughout different counties in this province. My stewardship council, the Elgin Stewardship Council, is a strong organization, and it survived what this government did to stewardship councils. This organization will work with landowners, help find matching grants and transform unusable farmland into wetlands or expand upon wetlands on people's farms. Every summer, I do a tour of the projects that are going on in my riding, and I find it just amazing the creation of these wetlands—the animals, the ducks that are around on the wetlands; the trees that are growing; the vegetation. It's just amazing what these people create.

Up till about four years ago, the government would allow the Ministry of Natural Resources a point person for these stewardship councils to utilize, to help coordinate these plans—because these are just a group of volunteers—in order to create these stewardship county councils. It would also work with these stewardship councils in order to ensure that they're functional.

Well, this government cut that program. In a budget cut a number of years ago, the environmentalist government on the other side cut the stewardship program, and many stewardship councils throughout the province were lost. Now, we're talking about trying to restore wetlands in this province, and this government cut a program that was helping to recreate wetlands. When you re-create wetlands, as I said before, you decrease the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and you also mitigate plenty of floods.

So I'm hoping this government goes forward and takes another look and utilizes the Ministry of Natural



Resources in its fight against climate change. There are so many ways that you could utilize the expertise and the abilities of that ministry to decrease the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

Now, this one comment—I take it over to the member from Windsor-Tecumseh, when he made a point about having a fund that isn't accountable or put off in another section. The Ministry of Natural Resources has a special-purpose account which takes all the hunting and fishing fees and royalties. It's supposed to re-spend that on the wildlife and the environment and reinvest it into the community, so it's supposed to go both ways. We can't get a detailed report out of this government. So even if we do put in an account for this Bill 172, this slush fund, even if there is a separate account, they aren't going to be accountable to the people of Ontario. They will not release reports.

I have been working on this government for four years to get a special-purpose report accounting of how they spend their money, to get grant numbers. I went through the privacy commissioner and his response was, "They don't keep records." If they don't keep records of how they spend their money, they're certainly not going to do it with the slush fund that they're creating. So it's quite interesting that they talk about how this is going to be a great fund to utilize. We know that it's going to be abused under this government.

I'll quickly go to what I think was quite an interesting interview two weeks ago, on budget day. I was sitting at home. I enjoy watching Steve Paikin on The Agenda. I find him quite interesting, he has interesting guests and he asks some pretty interesting questions. That night, he had Greg Sabora on. For those that may not know who Greg Sabora is, and I don't know how you wouldn't—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Sorbara.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Sorbara?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Sorbara.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It doesn't matter. He was an MPP from Vaughan and former finance minister. He had comments regarding the proposed Bill 172. Greg Sorbara commented that the minister said that there would be no tax increases; however, Mr. Sorbara said that there would be an increase of \$1.9 billion that would ultimately flow to the consumer. In other words, they'll create this fund, create this cap-and-trade scheme, tax the polluters, and basically that money will flow down to everyday Ontarians with higher fees and everything.

Mr. Sorbara even called out this government—his own government, his own people over there; he was part of this government for such a long time. Even then, he's saying that industries will pass the costs through the system, raising prices at the gas pumps and in our homes, and eventually raising prices for everything for consumers.

Greg Sorbara even said that there's no evidence that the cap-and-trade system significantly reduces carbon emissions. All it does is create a large bureaucracy—and this government loves large bureaucracies—and lots of money for the government. Their own member has said

that they're creating their own bureaucracy and their own slush fund. That's coming from a former finance minister. So I find it interesting that even Mr. Sorbara is skeptical of this scheme.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Wow, Mr. Speaker. The member from Burlington is heckling me. I understand her problems over there and the fact that they think their way is the only way. We're just saying: Don't create a slush fund that we know you're going to abuse down the road as a government.

We go back and we remember that this is the same government that said that the gas plant scandal only cost \$40 million. This is the same government that created a health tax for the health care system, but that money is no longer in the health care system, it goes to general revenue. This is the same government that is saying that they're not creating a slush fund. We've got to be careful about this. We've got to be careful about the lack of accountability that this government has shown over the years, and we have to ensure that when they do price carbon, it's done in a responsible way that's not going to jack up the price of everything in this province.

It's unfortunate. This government has a way to work with the wetlands of this province, to come up with a comprehensive plan to restore the environment; to work with landowners throughout this province, who are more than willing to utilize their land and create wetlands so that they act as natural carbon sinks in this province; to work with groups like Ducks Unlimited and the stewardship councils throughout Ontario and create conservation and an Ontario that, again, could be an environmental leader.

Our party takes a lot of hits from this government on the environment. Bill Davis created the Ministry of the Environment.

*Interjection:* Bill Davis did. You're right.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Mike Harris created more parkland than any Premier ever created. We've always been part of the environmental talk. It's not an issue this government likes to hear—the fact that we care about the environment on this side of the House; we care about health care on this side of the House; we care about social issues on this side of the House. This government has to realize that they aren't the only people in this world that actually want to do better for Ontarians. The official opposition, under the leadership of Patrick Brown, is going to be delivering an opposition to this government, a different choice come 2018, to ensure that the people of Ontario have a government that's accountable and transparent and that is properly funding health care, properly funding environmental programs, getting rid of the waste and scandal and working to lower the debt in this province.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to stand in this House. This is my first opportunity to be able to

speaking on this bill and respond to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. Although we support this bill in principle, we share many of the concerns that he expressed; specifically, accountability, transparency and whether it's going to be fair.

I'll give you a fairness example that's really coming to a head in rural Ontario and northern Ontario. This government puts a tax on fuel, on gas, to help fund their carbon change initiative. Okay? At the same time, they announce a \$100-million program to help people retrofit their houses to be more energy efficient. Good so far? But that program only applies to people who heat their homes with natural gas.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, it doesn't.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Yes.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, it doesn't.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Unless you've changed it.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** No, we never changed it. It never did.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's through Enbridge and Union Gas.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Perfect. I'm glad we've clarified that. I will publish it on my website if you send it to me.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** This is what the debate is about. I'm glad to hear that, because we've asked this question previously and been unable to get the answer. If that is, indeed, the case and the application process is actually workable—because, again, a lot of the people in northern Ontario have no connection to Enbridge or Union Gas, who are administering this program, because it was announced through them. It has not been made public how someone who heats with wood or oil or propane actually gets this program.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Same deal.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's one thing to deal with Union and Enbridge if you're already dealing with them. But how do you deal with them if you're not a customer?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** It's always a pleasure to rise in this place. I wanted to join the conversation.

The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, in his rather passionate discourse, talked about areas of interest and concern to me, primarily because, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, I'm honoured to have in my mandate letter the issues related to conservation authorities and wetlands. As the honourable member may know—I just want to inform him if he perhaps missed it—we're in the midst of a robust conversation and consultation provincially on wetlands. Why are we doing that? I will agree with the member that it is an area of interest and some concern, and certainly we share that with him. Wetland preservation is a priority for this government. That's precisely why we've undertaken that consultation.

I'll also agree with him on a couple of other things. Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy of Canada

are critically important partners to our government and to our ministry, particularly when it comes to wetlands. If I may, on conservation authorities, since he mentioned them too—also in my mandate letter—I'm proud to be leading, on behalf of this government, a province-wide consultation on conservation authorities. I just came from OGRA/ROMA, where I had the opportunity to hear from municipalities that are thrilled with this government. For the first time in 20 years, we're looking at conservation authorities. Why? Because they're critical in the climate change conversation. We have to make sure that they have the tools to do that.

What else do they talk about? They talk about the fact that under the Harris government, conservation authorities were downloaded onto municipalities, which left us with a framework of uncertainty. Of course, that needs to be looked at too. We're doing that as a government because we care about our conservation authorities and the role as partners to municipalities and others in the ongoing conversation about climate change.

Finally, I'm glad to see that they have been enlightened on the other side to see that a price on carbon is the right thing to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I thought, did a very good job describing work by Conservatives on issues environmental, and specifically the Ontario government, over many, many years. The Environmental Protection Act, for example, was first brought in by the provincial Conservatives.

I appreciate his focus on Bill 172, the climate change act, offering what I consider a very practical, environmentally sound, scientifically based approach when he made mention of ALUS, which stands for alternative land use services, again providing an economic incentive for landowners, for farmers, for those who own marshland, to set aside some of that marginal land, oftentimes wetland, for wildlife habitat and linking that with Bill 172. We have the advantage in this province, in this country, of vast acreages not only of farmland but forestland, prairie land and wetland.

This is the kind of environment that absorbs carbon dioxide. I know we talk about carbon, but the real issue is carbon dioxide. Water absorbs carbon dioxide. Land absorbs carbon dioxide. A parking lot in the city of Toronto does not absorb carbon dioxide. A roof on a warehouse in Ottawa does not absorb carbon dioxide. We have these natural advantages. We need to work with Mother Nature. There are a whole lot of science-based measures that can be taken to deal with this issue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's indeed a pleasure to stand and make reference to some of the comments made by my friend from Elgin–Middlesex–London as well as members of the government who stood and made comments.

I was intrigued earlier when the member from Northumberland–Quinte West talked about the Blue Box



Program. I was reminded of a meeting I had with people at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who told us there was a government plan out there to look at the Blue Box Program and where it's headed and to get a fairer deal for municipalities, because right now they're subsidizing the producers, I think up to 30% in Ontario, and they're fed up with it. They don't want to do it anymore. They told us about the example in Vancouver where the mayor of Vancouver said, "Hey, the producers own this stuff. It's their responsibility. We're getting out of the business. If they're not going to pay us 100% of the cost of recovering the material in the blue box, they can do it themselves." I think that could well happen in Ontario as well if the government doesn't take steps on this.

In response to the member from Burlington when she mentioned the ROMA/OGRA conference, we also heard from the municipality of Chatham-Kent, where they have 2,500 drains. There's a huge conflict between the Drainage Act and the Endangered Species Act, where they have to drain, repair and dredge 500 drains a year and yet, under the Endangered Species Act, they'll have to go out and hire five field biologists to do the research, examination and investigation before they can do their work of draining the municipal drains to get the water off the farmers' fields to protect the crops. The government isn't doing enough. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario agrees that the two acts are in conflict and something must be done and must be done soon, or else we're going to have great havoc in the fields in Essex, Kent and Lambton counties.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to reply.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank those who commented from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Burlington, Haldimand–Norfolk and Windsor–Tecumseh.

I'm glad the member from Burlington mentioned that she was PA for the MNR. Hopefully she can get me the information for the special-purpose account that I've been asking for for years. I think it will be great. I throw it out to you. I hope to have it in my box by the end of the week.

We had some great programs we mentioned here that I think the government should take a hold of, working toward ensuring that our wetlands are restored, working with groups like Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that we can work together with our stewardship councils throughout the province, to work with landowners to revitalize our environment and return the wetlands.

1750

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk again talked about the ALUS program. It's a great program. I think it's something that could be expanded upon province-wide. The members from the Long Point Region Conservation Authority have done an amazing job, as well as the municipalities of Bayham and—I'm not sure which ones are in Norfolk or not.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Oh, Haldimand—Norfolk county.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Norfolk county. Great programs working together.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Bill 76 from the MPP for Sarnia–Lambton. It's been talked about a lot this week. It is going to committee on Thursday. There's overwhelming support on this side of the House for the bill, so I'm hoping the government works with the other parties at the committee to ensure this bill gets the proper amendments and comes back for third reading as soon as possible. It's another measure this government can take to improve the environment in this province.

I think we don't need to focus on one particular item to fix the environment. There's a multitude of ideas to choose from, to work together and achieve the goal we want to achieve, which is a healthy, safe environment for the generation of today and the generations of tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** A point of order to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to correct my record. At the end of my just-made remarks, I said Essex, Kent and Lambton counties. I meant to say Essex, Chatham-Kent and Lambton counties.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane, and today on Bill 172, climate change and the low-carbon economy.

Often I've heard, in the speeches today and others I've heard about climate change—I'd just like to clarify something: We are fully in favour of doing something about the climate change issue we face today. But a lot of people talk about climate change like it's static, like when I hear people who say, "We've had a severe thunderstorm," or "We've had floods," and that's an example of climate change. It's not. For climate change, we have to look at long-term trends, but to use every individual climatic event as an example of climate change, I think, is giving a false backdrop to the issue.

I've stood in this House often and talked about where my farm is. It's in what was a former glacial lake. It was caused by the glaciers. That is long-term climate change, because where we farmed, it was all ice. Where the moraines are, the Oak Ridges moraine, is how far the glaciers got. So climate change isn't a static thing.

What we're discussing here is the climate change that's man-made. Because of things we've done as a species, we are speeding up the climate change or changing the climate. I think we have to look at this whole debate as that being the part of climate change that we are looking at addressing. Because the climate is constantly changing long-term, we have to look specifically at what we can change.

We have good examples of where we have actually been forced to take the initiative, and where we have

done it. It has come across a couple of times here. I believe that the Chair of Cabinet was speaking about Sudbury, and it's a good example, where a lot of sulphur dioxide was spewed out and they took action. I don't have the historical knowledge that some of the people here do about what happened, but I do know that even in agriculture where I live, we actually got a benefit out of the sulphur, because when you have a little bit of sulphur, it helps to grow crops. Since the Sudbury basin has created a lot less sulphur, which is a good thing, we've had to adjust our fertilizer mixtures to add more sulphur to make up for what is not coming from Sudbury.

That's an example of how climate change has far-reaching effects. I hope, if I am mistaken on this, that somebody corrects me, but there is a kind of cap-and-trade system for sulphur, and it's still working today. There's an example of how this could work.

What most people, the people I talk to—and others have expressed this: We need a policy that's effective, fair and transparent. If we can work together to get that, we can work together to solve the issue.

You can't blame people for having some questions regarding the transparency part, because this government doesn't have a very good record on transparency. I've heard the Minister of the Environment say that the money collected is going to go in a separate account, and the regulations don't allow it to be spent anywhere else. That sounds comforting. But the money that was basically wasted to move those two gas plants—I'm assuming there was some regulation to stop that as well, but that didn't happen.

I'm assuming that there was some kind of regulation somewhere that would have stopped—should have stopped—the problems we had with Ornge Air, but that didn't happen. There was a lot of money and initiative wasted.

That's an issue. It's fine to say that there are regulations, but this government has not earned the trust to be able to say that without putting it on the table.

The best thing would be a separate account, a true separate account.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** It is a separate account.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** No, it's not a true separate account.

Another issue that I don't think too many people have touched on today is that it has to be effective. If you have X amount of dollars and you say, "Okay, we're going to create this program, and it has something to do with climate change, so therefore it's fundable," that's not proof that it's actually the most effective way to spend the money. There should be a way—and I'm sure someone has the energy and the brainpower to figure this out—to say, "This is the unit of carbon that we can eliminate per X amount of dollars, per \$1,000, and if it doesn't meet that criteria, it's not a good program." I haven't seen that, but something like that is vital for this to actually work, because that's the part about it being effective.

Paying for a subsidy on electric cars might not be the most effective way to spend the money. We don't know, because there has been no real calculation to show that X amount of dollars paid to subsidize electric cars is actually going to take out so many units of carbon. I haven't seen it in any other documentation. That's a big issue.

You're looking at me, Speaker. Are we—okay. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
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<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiles, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	



Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
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<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
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Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe  
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns  
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#### Royal Ottawa Inspiration Awards

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